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By Charles E. Jefferson, D.D.

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NATURE SERMONS

By

CHARLES E. JEFFERSON, D.D., LL.D.

Pastor, The Broadway Tabernacle, New York, N. Y.

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CONTENTS

I.	INTRODUCTORY	7
II.	THE RAINBOW	17
III.	DESERTS	26
IV.	BIRDS	40
V.	SUNSETS	54
VI.	STORMS	70
VII.	SHADOWS	83
VIII.	SOUNDS	95
IX.	MISTS	108
X.	SPRING	125
XI.	ODOURS	135
XII.	THE LANDSCAPE	151
XIII.	LAKES	162

I

INTRODUCTORY

THIS is a volume of Nature sermons. By Nature sermons, I mean a sermon which draws its substance from some phenomenon or feature or aspect of the physical creation. It differs, chiefly, from the conventional sermon in two points. The traditional sermon has a text taken from the Bible; the Nature sermon needs no text at all. Its theme is an object or a fact or a picture set forth in the book of Nature. In the second place, the materials of the ordinary sermon are collected for the most part from books, whereas the materials made use of in a Nature sermon are largely drawn from the physical universe. In preparing his usual sermon, the preacher takes down his various versions of the Bible, his commentaries, dictionaries and encyclopedias; he consults, perhaps, various volumes of history and biography and ethics and sociology; sometimes he quotes a novel or a stanza of poetry, a magazine or a newspaper. It is not uncommon for a preacher to make use of a score of volumes in the creation of a single sermon. But in writing a Nature sermon, the preacher locks his library door and takes a stroll through God's Out-of-Doors. He endeavours to get near to Nature's heart. She supplies him with hints and suggestions, ideas and illustrations, and becomes to him a medium of revelation of the mind of God.

If a critic should intimate that a sermon is not a sermon without a text, the reply is that Amos and Hosea were great preachers, and both of them preached

effective sermons without texts. Isaiah and Jeremiah were mighty spokesmen for God, but neither one of them was in the habit of going to a book for a text. The Hebrew prophets were the great preachers of pre-Christian times, and it was their custom to organize their sermons around facts and events. In the experiences of their own heart or of their nation, they found the material which it was their mission to interpret and apply. In the victories and defeats, the joys and the tribulations of their people, they read the will of the Eternal. In their teaching they were always falling back on suggestions and inspirations which swept in upon them from the heavens and the earth. A drought, an earthquake, a famine, a fruitful season, were to them words of the Lord. No Old Testament sermon has the smell of the lamp.

The Apostles followed the example of the prophets, dealing in their sermons, not with sentences taken from a book, but with facts and events and experiences, especially the experiences of Jesus. The Founder of our religion did not preach from texts. The Sermon on the Mount has no text, nor has any other recorded discourse of our Lord. He drew His sermons out of His heart, refusing to preach after the fashion of the scribes—preachers who got their sermons out of books. He made use of the Old Testament, occasionally, when by doing it He could answer an objection of His foes, or flash light upon an idea which He was endeavouring to drive home; but He seldom went to a book in search of sentences with which to begin His discourses. He kept the eyes of His hearers, not on the pages of a book, but on the book of Life, as that life was unfolding itself all around Him, and on the book of Nature whose paragraphs it was His delight to read. "Look

at the flowers!" He was wont to say. "Look at the birds!" "Look at the fields of waving grain!" "Look at the sunbeams and the passing showers!" It was His joy to preach under the open sky, seated on the grass, with the songs of birds in His ear, and the silver gleam of the sea in His eye.

To the Hebrew mind, Nature was a medium of revelation. "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge." Nature reveals the character of God because Nature is the creation of God. "Who covereth the heaven with clouds, who prepareth rain for the earth, who maketh grass to grow upon the mountains. . . . He giveth snow like wool. He scattereth the hoarfrost like ashes. He casteth forth his ice like morsels: . . . He sendeth out his word, and melteth them: he causeth his wind to blow, and the waters flow." And because God has created the forces of Nature, all these forces are His servants, and they exist solely to do His will. "Praise the Lord from the earth, ye dragons and all deeps; fire and hail, snow and vapours; stormy wind fulfilling his word." Paul was true to the Hebrew conception when he wrote to the Romans that "the invisible things of him [God] since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead."

If, then, the physical creation is a revelation of the character and will of the Eternal, why should a Christian minister ignore Nature in his preaching? Why should he deal solely with ideas uttered by holy men of old, and turn his back upon the fresh revelation which God is making daily in the phenomena and

processes of the material creation? As Emerson long ago wrote: "The foregoing generations beheld God and Nature face to face, we through their eyes. Why should we not also enjoy an original relation to the universe?" If some one says that the preacher is bound to get his sermon out of the Word of God, the reply is that he does not forsake the Word of God when he goes to Nature. What is the book of Nature but a version of the Word of God? Is not the book of Nature a Bible—an earlier Bible—God's oldest Bible—and why should we allow the recent Bible, the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures, to crowd the ancient Bible completely out? Sir Thomas Browne was a wise man when he wrote: "There are two books from which I collect my divinity; besides the written one of God, another of His servant Nature, that universal and public manuscript that lies expansed unto the eyes of all. Those that never saw Him in the one have discovered Him in the other."

This is a volume of sermons. Those who expect essays or lectures will be disappointed. A Nature sermon like every other type of sermon may readily slip into something other than that it purports to be. Calling a pulpit discourse a sermon does not make it a sermon. A Nature sermon may degenerate into a Nature essay. The preacher may ape the manner of Henry Thoreau or John Burroughs, but an essay is not a sermon. Essay-writing is not the forte of the preacher. A Nature sermon may also glide into a Nature lecture. The preacher may try to imitate Huxley and Tyndall, Lankester and Lodge, but if he does this, he is sure to fail. A lecture is not a sermon. An essay aims at instruction and entertainment. A lecture has for its prime object, the impartation of

knowledge. It furnishes information which the intellect may store up for future use. But the aim of the sermon is to move the soul nearer to God. It may instruct, but the instruction is secondary. It may entertain, but the entertaining is incidental. The object of a genuine sermon is edification—the building up of the soul in God. This is a volume of Nature sermons. I am neither an essayist nor a lecturer. I lack the talent of an essayist, and my knowledge of science is meagre. For Nature essays one must go to the library, and for Nature lectures to the university. The Christian pulpit is no place for either essays or lectures. The pulpit was built for the preacher. Woe to the man in the pulpit who does not preach! If a Nature sermon is less of a sermon than one built on a text of Holy Writ, it is unworthy of a place in the pulpit. The aim of all these Nature sermons is to move the mind and heart nearer to God.

It was near the end of the nineteenth century that I decided to add a string to my pulpit harp, and on at least one Sunday of every year to preach a Nature sermon. The immediate occasion of my resolution was the unsettled condition of the Christian mind owing to the endless discussion of the results of the Higher Criticism. The air was filled with puzzling questions, and the minds of many were disturbed. Men were eagerly asking who wrote *The Pentateuch,* who wrote *The Psalms,* who wrote *Isaiah,* who wrote *The Fourth Gospel,* who wrote *The Pastoral Epistles?* The question of authorship was at the front. And so, also, was the question of date. In what century were these ancient writings written? Which were exilic—which pre-exilic—which post-exilic? Which of the New Testament writings belong to the first cen-

tury, and which belong to the second? There was interminable wrangling over interpolations and redactions and glosses. Opposing schools affirmed and denied the genuineness and authenticity of nearly all the Sacred Writings.

With all Christendom in such a turmoil, I turned one Sunday to that ancient Bible, of whose plenary inspiration there can be no doubt, and in regard to whose authority all sane minds are agreed. However it may be with the Old and New Testaments, we know who wrote the Scriptures of the heavens and the earth. There are no interpolations in the skies. No redactor has left his mark upon the seas. No forger has ever tampered with the dawn. Men may hesitate to call the Book which lies upon the pulpit God's Book, but who would hesitate to call Nature the Book of God? He writes His autograph in lines of silver fire across the night, He writes it in the flames of setting suns, He writes it in the changing shimmer of the sea. But no matter how He writes it, we always recognize His hand. And as for dates, we do not think of dates when we feast our eyes on mountain-peaks, or gaze into a sky filled with stars. No one cares what the year was in which the Atlantic Ocean, like a big boy, came up to play on the sand on Rockaway Beach, nor does any one have the slightest curiosity to know the number of the century in which the Great Bear joined the procession of the constellations ordered to move around the Pole. If at any time the brain becomes confused by the arguments and counter-arguments of the scholars, it is well to close the Book which contains the words of Prophets and Apostles, and read, for a little while, what has been written by the undoubted finger of God.

The big Book which the Church prizes as an invaluable treasure is both human and divine. It is God's Book, and it is also man's Book. In this Book, God and man have collaborated to produce a message to meet the needs of mankind. It is impossible to draw the line, severing the divine from the human. In listening to the Bible, one cannot at all times tell whether he is listening to man or to God. When one listens to Nature he is *certain* he is listening to God. No human creature has ever been permitted to collaborate with the Eternal in the unfolding of the morning or in the painting of a dying day—in the decking of the Springtime or in the creation of the pageantry of a cloudless night. There are no human finger-prints either on the ocean or on the clouds. When one becomes bewildered by the strife of tongues over the doctrine of Inspiration, let him turn to the sacred volume whose authority cannot be questioned, and whose authorship cannot be successfully assailed. If the Zeitgeist make him sceptical as to the validity of the voices which speak through prophecy and psalm, through epistle and gospel, let him pay reverent attention to another set of voices—the voices which come sounding through the flowers and the forests, through the beauty of the landscapes and the thunder of storms. Nature and the Bible are both rich gifts of God. Let us use them both.

Moreover: I was preaching to a city congregation, and city congregations are in special need of the healing influences of the woods and fields. A great city has a tendency, in generous natures, to enlarge the mind and widen the heart, but in certain ways it has a tendency to dwarf and narrow. While the intellectual faculties are whetted to a keener edge, the phys-

ical senses are in danger of becoming atrophied. A city shuts men in behind walls of marble and steel, brick and granite, and these are not a wholesome environment for human nerves. Eyeballs which are rubbed constantly against asphalt and iron lose something of their power of seeing, and ears which are filled incessantly with the hubbub and clang of the street lose something of their power of hearing. Now and again, one needs to escape from the gloomy canyons of city streets, where the sky is cut into narrow and dingy ribbons, and where the air is tainted with the poison of a thousand unhallowed smells, and look upon the world which God has made. One needs to bathe his eyes in the dew upon the morning grass, and to wash his mind in the perfumes of the fields. It is not conducive to fullness of life to live uninterruptedly in a city. A city is an artificial creation—a piece of the handiwork of man. It is a man-made world. A city man is in danger of settling down in the conviction that there is no other world. He reads the papers morning and evening. He gets his eyes full of printer's ink. After dinner, he goes to the theatre, and feasts upon the cheap and tawdry scenery of the stage. In the street he is jostled and hustled by the crowd. In his business he contends with the perversities of many types of human nature. Often he is irritated and, at times, he is exasperated. City life is always tending to become feverish and abnormal. A city man needs frequent contacts with Nature. He that hath ears to hear can hear Nature saying: "Come unto me and I will give you rest."

Nature is a great rest-giver. And Nature is a great physician. In the city we become excitable and hot. We move at a headlong pace. The interruptions and

collisions are many. We need a physician who can take the fever from the brow and the fret out of the heart. Nature has remedies for all who are sick. The pessimism and cynicism of great cities are the result of continuous contact with human tragedies and miseries. Something is always going wrong; vice is always flaunting itself in one's face; crime is always being committed, some one is always suffering; some one is always dying. It is difficult to keep serene and sane in such a bedlam of a world. We need Nature. She is sensible and strong. She has no vagaries, no hallucinations, no delusions. She indulges in no fads. She wastes no time in speculations or guesses. She keeps, for ever, an even pulse. We need her. To think of her quiets the heart; to gaze on her calm face is refreshment and power.

Why is the human world so agitating and upsetting? How could it be otherwise? When one thinks of the great mass of rebellious souls and disordered minds and corrupted hearts which go to make up a city, it is not to be wondered at that a world so constituted should irritate us, drag us down and wear us out. The world of Nature is soothing because there is no sin there. No blade of grass has ever broken a divine commandment, no flower has ever blushed with guilt, no tree has ever lifted itself in insurrection against the Most High. Not a rock has ever entertained an evil thought. Not an insect has ever rejected the Divine Mercy. Not a mountain, lake or sea has ever blasphemed the name of Christ. Not a twig has ever been twisted by remorse. Throughout the realm of Nature obedience is perfect, submission to the Divine Will is instantaneous and complete. In the midst of such surroundings the soul is calmed and charmed and lifted.

Nature is a giver of joy. The Kingdom of God is a Kingdom of Joy, but joyousness is not one of the notes of the life of the average Christian. We are not joyous because we have not advanced far into the Kingdom of God. As the years increase, many of the fountains of happiness begin to fail. He is a wise man who keeps as many fountains as possible flowing. The love of Nature is an unfailing fountain of joy. The aged man of eighty, as well as the youth of twenty, can drink at her springs and be satisfied. For the man or woman who has learned to enter into the wonder and bloom of the mighty world of eye and ear, there is a perpetual feast spread, and no matter what happens, life will not be without its solace and its song. The spirit of Nature is the spirit of Joy. An ancient poet says that when the foundations of the earth were laid, "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." When we love Nature we enter into the joy of our Lord. I have preached these sermons on Nature because I wished to be a helper of your joy.

"Back to Nature!" That is one of the thrilling slogans of our generation. Who are these men and women who have caught a new vision of the glory of the physical creation, and who are drinking from it fresh strength and gladness? They are the artists and the poets, the scientists and the educators. Why should not the preacher join the procession? Why should not the Christian Church be baptized into this revivifying spirit? Why should not the servants of the King enrich their conception of the majesty and wisdom of the Maker of heaven and earth by meditating more often on the things which He has made?

in Australia, another in Arabia. We have a vast one here, in our own country. But as everybody knows, the greatest desert on the earth is the Sahara in Africa. Deserts, then, whether made of water, or ice, or sand, are a conspicuous feature of the natural world.

When we begin to study deserts, we find ourselves face to face with an impenetrable mystery. That is what we always find when we study Nature. Men sometimes speak as if there were no mysteries outside the spiritual world; as a matter of fact, the natural world is also filled with them. Tennyson plucks a flower from the wall, holds it in his hand and finds in it a beautiful mystery, and declares that if he could only understand that little flower, he could understand man and God. Horace Bushnell in his interesting book entitled *The Moral Uses of Dark Things*, closes his list of dark things with the ocean. What a mysterious thing it is, when you stop to think about it, that four-fifths of the earth should be covered with water! Man is a land animal and was created to live on the land. The earth was created to be his home, and yet only one-fifth of the earth's surface is land. There is only a little land and the amazing thing is that so much of that little is uninhabited. Man cannot live amid the eternal snows. He can stay there for a season, but he cannot abide there permanently, and yet a considerable part of all the earth's land area has been covered for countless thousands of years with a blanket of ice and snow. Man cannot prosper in regions of sand scorched by the sun, and yet there are vast regions of the earth given up to the sand. The Sahara desert is as large as the United States. Leaving out Norway, Sweden and Iceland, it is almost as large as Europe. God has thrown down on our planet

a few rugs, some of them white, some of them yellow, some of them blue, and some of them green. He has said to humanity, "Keep off the rugs that are white, and yellow and blue. You may pass over them if you please, but you must not tarry on them long. It is My good pleasure that you should make your home on the rugs that are green." Verily this is a great mystery.

But however mysterious the desert we are bound to acknowledge that it is one of God's creations. We are in danger of forgetting this. When we suddenly come upon a magnificent landscape—it may be some beautiful valley with a river running through it, or some great prairie golden with grain—we involuntarily exclaim: "This is God's country!" When we look out upon a region made up entirely of rock and sand, we say: "What a God-forsaken place this is!" We are ready to acknowledge the handiwork of the Creator in the things that are beautiful and fruitful; it is difficult for us to discern Infinite wisdom and skill in the things that are blasted and ugly. It is not easy, then, to bear always in mind that the desert was created by an infinitely wise God.

Nor does the Bible help us much in our appreciation of the desert. The Hebrew heart was sensitive to many parts of the natural world, but there were two things to which it never was able to do justice: it never responded to the sea and it never responded to the desert. You hear the Hebrew poet saying: "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained," but you never hear any Hebrew poet saying: "When I consider thy desert the work of thy fingers, the sand-storm and the sand-dunes which thou hast ordained." Hebrew music

never reaches that lofty pitch. In the one hundred and forty-seventh Psalm the poet makes a catalogue of the works of God. He begins with the stars, and then enumerates the features of creation one after the other: clouds, rain, grass, beasts, birds. It delights him to feel that God sends the snow like wool, casts forth His ice like morsels, that at His will the warm winds blow, the snows melt, the waters flow. This poet is exceedingly appreciative of the wonders of the world, but he has nothing to say about deserts. He does not include the desert in his list.

In the one hundred and forty-eighth Psalm another Hebrew poet invites the whole of creation to make a church. He wants to organize a great choir and set everybody singing. He invites everybody and everything. He begins at the very top of the universe. His first invitation goes to the angels and all the heavenly hosts; then he includes the sun and the moon and the stars; dropping down to the earth, he invites the ocean and the dragons that sport in their deeps. He also extends an invitation to fire and hail, snow and vapour, and all the winds of the storms. He next invites the mountains and the hills, and all kinds of trees—fruitful trees and forest trees. He desires that every one shall come. He invites every kind of beast, both wild and domestic. He asks the birds to come, and also the snakes, everything that crawls, is exhorted to praise the Lord. And having invited all inanimate creation, all the lower world, all the beasts and the birds, he extends his invitation to humanity. He begins with kings and princes and judges, and runs down to the little children. No one is omitted, no part of the earth is left out—except the desert. The Hebrew poet does not invite the desert to come to church. He

does not seem to know that the desert can sing. It is counted a heathen and a publican.

And yet it is undoubtedly true that God made the desert. If He did not make it, who did? Man never made it. Only the Almighty could make such a wonderful thing as a desert. He made it by two of His most wonderful servants, the sun and the wind. It is because the sun and the wind work together that we have any deserts at all. The first thing that the wind does is to clear of moisture a space in the air. No rain-clouds are allowed to come into a certain region of the sky. The wind keeps them away. This gives the sun a chance to fall upon the earth with unobstructed energy. The sun falls on the rocks. He heats them burning hot. There is no moisture in the air to obstruct him. He does his fierce pleasure, and then he goes away, and there being no moisture in the air, the radiation is rapid and the rocks cool. The sudden heating and the sudden cooling breaks them, crushes them, pulverizes them, reduces them to sand. It is then that the wind begins its great work. It takes the sand in its hands and it scatters it, scatters it for miles and miles. It uses it as a polishing agency, and it scours the faces of the cliffs until they are smooth as ice. It is in this way that the wind makes more sand. And after it has made it in great abundance, it plays with it. It throws it into the air, sometimes in columns rising two thousand feet above the earth. And after it has made this column of sand it sends it moving across the earth. Why, nobody knows. It would seem that even the sand likes to play. The wind loves the sand. It is always toying with it. It makes things out of it. It says: "I will now make an imitation of the sea when the sea is blown upon by a gentle breeze,

I will make undulations out of sand, I will make a vast ocean with yellow waves"—and it does all this.

You can stand upon the desert and look out toward the horizon and feel that you are looking out across a golden ocean, every wave kissed by the sun. And then again the wind says: "I will now make an imitation of the ocean tossed by storm," and it moulds the sand into great billows like the billows of the sea, large and wild and yellow. One can look out across their crests, for miles and miles, and feel that this is indeed a sea—a sea of sand.

And when the wind is in a different mood it plays with the sand as little children play with it on the seashore. It piles it into hillocks which we call dunes. It piles it into ridges, ramparts, forms that look like old fortifications. Sometimes it piles it into hills and almost into mountains. The formation of the desert is exceedingly varied. Those who have never given attention to the desert, either in books or travel, have the idea that the desert is always flat. They are mistaken. There are flat places in the desert, but not all of the desert is level. There is just as great variety in the desert as in the fertile regions of the earth. There are hills and there are valleys, there are plateaus and there are prairies, and there are also lofty mountains. There are mountains in the Sahara rising as high as seven thousand feet above the sea, and in our own desert in Colorado there are mountains over ten thousand feet in height. If you could strip the Empire State of all its foliage, you would have a region not a whit more varied in its topography than are many of the deserts of the world.

The desert, then, is made by sun and wind; and what are the sun and wind but servants of Almighty God?

They could not do what they do if they were not commanded. The Hebrew poet was right when he said that stormy winds are ministers of His and fulfill His word. I like the Arabs' word for desert. They call it "The Garden of Allah"—that is, "The Garden of God." We do not ordinarily associate the word garden with the thought of Deity, we always think of it in connection with man. In a garden, there is always something more or less conventional, artificial. In a garden, things are trimmed and trained and tied. We have our landscape gardeners, and they are exceedingly clever men. They can take almost any tract of territory and convert it into a thing of beauty. They have a trick of getting the flowers to grow in beds and the trees to grow in clumps. They know where to toss in a pretty little lake and at what spot to erect an artistic bridge.

It is all quite charming, but, to my mind, there is something more beautiful than anything which a landscape gardener ever did. I know woodlands in New England that run far beyond any garden that an artist ever made, woodlands where the trees all grow just as they please, where vine and ivy cling as they please, and where every little flower takes the place that suits it. And when I look upon that loveliness, I know that it has been created by the supreme Landscape Gardener. God can make gardens as well as men. The desert is the Garden of God. There is nothing in it which has been trimmed, nothing there has felt the touch of man's training hand, nothing there is tied. Everything is precisely as it was when it left the hand of God. O Arab! you are right, your name is perfect—the desert is the Garden of God!

We always associate a garden with the idea of the beautiful; and those who are not familiar with the desert might be inclined to say that the name is misplaced when applied to it. To the imagination of many the desert is anything but beautiful; it is a place of ugliness and horror; it is a charnel-house with the grinning skulls of men and the bleached carcasses of animals; it is a region of desolation in which only poisonous insects and reptiles make their home; it is a vast stretch of monotonous sand. But those who really know the desert, know that it is beautiful. One beauty differs from another beauty in glory. The beauty of the desert is not the beauty of the Hudson valley, nor of the Dakota prairie; it has a beauty of its own.

It is a mistake to imagine that there is only one colour in the desert. It is true that the desert is prevailingly yellow, but there are a thousand shades of yellow. There is the yellow of buff and the yellow of amber; there is the orange yellow, there is the yellow of gold. There are yellowish whites and whitish yellows and grayish yellows and yellowish grays, yellowish browns and brownish yellows, yellowish reds and reddish yellows; and all these are changing with every hour of the day. They are one thing in the morning before the sun is up, and quite another thing when the sun, peeping above the horizon, throws his rays through strata of air saturated with fine particles of sand. Quite another thing is the desert, at noon, and a thousand other things it becomes when the sun goes down, and quite another thing, still, when the starlight falls on it and it becomes pallid and ethereal and wan. Experts in colour tell us that we must go to the desert to learn delicacy of tint and exquisite-

ness of tinge. No one would ever say that the desert is not beautiful who had ever camped for a night on the sand.

When I look down the Connecticut valley at Northfield, in summer, I am delighted by the infinite variety in its shades of green. God must love green because He makes so many shades of it; so also must He love yellow, for the shades of it are infinite in number. Yellow is more exciting to our eye than green because we are less accustomed to it, and when one looks out upon the desert he feels he is looking upon a world the like of which he has never before seen. It seems almost as though some one were holding a coloured glass before the eyes in order to make the world look like enchantment.

Ordinarily we associate a garden with fragrance. In a garden there is always the suggestion of perfume. "Certainly there is no fragrance in the desert," you may say. "How can you get perfume when you have no trees, no plants, no grasses?" Who told you that there are no shrubs or grasses, no flowers or blossoms in the desert? There are. Not only does every desert have its oases, but, here and there, there are shrubs and flowering plants. I have always thought that if I were a botanist I should love to devote myself to the plants of the desert. There is something about them that bewitches me. They are so heroic, their powers of endurance are marvellous, they seem to defy the sun and the sand, they live right on in spite of almost incredible opposition. They devise the most curious methods for getting all the moisture they can and for making the utmost out of it. Heroic little plants! They have in them the very courage and endurance of the Son of God Himself, and they give

out, many of them, a faint but exquisite perfume. It is with flowers as it is with people. Oftentimes the lives that have been most oppressed and crushed exhibit the finest beauty. It is the hearts that have been compelled to resist the most cruel circumstances that have in them a loveliness which we find nowhere else. So it is with desert shrubs and desert flowers. The very fact that they are obliged to fight, day by day and night by night, for mere existence on the earth, gives them a peculiar fragrance which seems to be brought from some far-off, celestial world. These faint and delicate odours steal across the sand. There is no moisture in the air and therefore nothing to impede their onward progress. They will travel for miles to greet you, and now and then it seems as though you were breathing an atmosphere wafted from some hidden paradise.

What an odourous place a city is! Our atmosphere is reeking with foul odours. Walk down almost any of our streets, and the nose is offended, again and again, by the odours that assail it. There is the smell of soot, of smoke, of the garbage-can, of escaping gases, all sorts of earthly smells stirred up by men who are digging in the streets, bringing to the sunlight soil that has been soaked in all kinds of pollution. Pass into the houses—in the hallway a heavy smell, in the parlour a musty smell, in the bedroom an unventilated smell, in the dining-room the smell of the kitchen. If it were not that our olfactory sense is dulled, we could not live in the city at all. We speak of ventilation—there is no ventilation in the city. In the desert, the ventilation is perfect. No chimneys to belch out soot and smoke, none of the thousand sources of contamination with which we are afflicted in great

cities. The desert air is clean, and because it is so clean, and because the desert shrubs and plants are so heroic, their delicate odours steal across the sand to refresh and delight the weary traveller. Never think of the desert as being devoid of fragrance.

What, then, is it possible for the desert to do for us? It is a medium of revelation. It brings a message from the Most High. It gives us a new idea of sunlight. We hardly know what sunlight is. Our air is always filled with moisture, and the sunlight only comes dripping through. We are never exposed to the full glare of the sun, even on the days that are sunniest, but in the desert the sun falls through the air unobstructed and his light is well-nigh blinding. The world in which we live is dark. It eats up the sunbeams as soon as they fall. Green is especially greedy of light, and when the light falls on it it is extinguished. The desert does not eat the sun, it keeps it. The sun throws down a flood of glory upon it and it lies there, and when you look out across the desert it seems to be burning like a fiery furnace, it seethes like an oven. We do not know what light is until the desert tells us, nor do we know the full range or the heavenly loveliness of colour. God is a great colourist, and He performs some of His very greatest miracles of colouring in the desert. In the desert the sun is not obstructed by vapour, it can make use of the sand. It can create the mirage, which is one of the loveliest of all veils. And the desert can put it on and lay it off at its will.

The desert, too, gives us a new revelation of immensity. We get the revelation, to be sure, from the midnight sky. It has a wonderful, tranquillizing influence on the heart. If one can look upon the night

sky for ten minutes and hold himself still for that long, one receives an impression which only immensity can give. But that is immensity in one of its forms only. If you stand on the prow of an ocean liner and look ahead of you toward the horizon, here you have both sky and sea, and again the heart is awed, but the impression is different from that which is given by the starry heavens. Look out upon the desert and you have immensity again, but it is different from the sky and it is different from the sea. The sea is always restless.

> *"The ocean old, centuries old,*
> *Strong as youth and as uncontrolled,*
> *Paces restless to and fro,*
> *Up and down the sands of gold."*

The desert is still. The desert is not impatient. The desert suggests no restlessness. Here is immensity as immovable as marble, as calm as death. The desert also gives us the revelation of silence. We are living in a noisy world. Many of us hardly know what silence is. There are different degrees and forms of silence. There is a silence of the mountain-top, and there is a silence of the cave, and there is also the silence of the desert. I have felt the silence of the mountain-top in the Canadian Rockies, and it was an exhilarating silence, a silence that lifted the heart and excited it. I have felt the silence of the Mammoth Cave in Kentucky; it was an oppressive silence, a silence that was painful, and which became, at last, unendurable. I have felt the silence of the Libyan Desert, and it was different from the other two. It was an illuminating silence—it quieted and soothed the heart. One could understand why it is written in *The*

Psalter, as a word from the mouth of the Almighty: "Be still, and know that I am God." Here, then, in the desert we find another medium of revelation. A drop of water, a flake of snow, a grain of sand—these are three windows in the temple of matter through which we look out upon the Infinite.

But can the desert do anything more than awe us and charm us? Yes, it can cheer us. It can give us fresh hope. It has only recently dawned upon the human mind that the desert can be changed. For centuries it has remained one of the unchanging things in God's universe. At one time man was afraid of the ocean. Little by little he learned to conquer it. To-day he feels he is master of it. Mountains were once barriers. Man has learned to chisel his way through them. But the desert, through all the centuries, has remained what it was at the beginning—grim, defiant, unconquerable. But a change has been coming over our dreams. Man is now dreaming of conquering the desert. It has been discovered that there is water under the desert. It is possible to bring the water to the surface and to make the desert bloom as the rose.

When you go out to Heliopolis in Egypt, you find yourself in the midst of a wonderful city that has sprung up, as it were, out of the sand. There is sand all around it, and you wonder how a city so magnificent could have grown there. Ask some one to explain to you the mystery, and he will tell you that they brought up water from beneath the sand.

Out in our Colorado desert they have, by the skillful use of water, learned how to produce all kinds of fruits, right in the midst of regions that were held for centuries in the grip of the wind and the sand. Watermelons and cantaloupes, oranges and lemons,

pomegranates and figs, grapes and dates, some of the most luscious fruit grown upon the earth is now coming out of the Colorado desert. But shall we ever be able to do anything with the Sahara? Undoubtedly. The engineers are entertaining dreams. Some of them have already put their plans on paper. The Sahara will not be conquered to-day nor to-morrow, but, some day, it will be completely subdued by man. We make a mistake when we suppose that the desert is sand and sand only. There are sand-areas in the desert, but the most of the desert is not sand. Only one-third of the Sahara is sand; more than two-thirds of it are fertile soil, and the soil will bring forth rich harvests as soon as it is given water. What, then, seems to be hopeless barrenness is, after all, fertility waiting for water.

And this gives me hope for myself. There have been, in my own nature, barren stretches which have produced no harvests for the glory of God. These, too, can be brought into cultivation if only my will-power co-operates with the grace of God. There are vast regions in society which seem absolutely abandoned and hopeless, great stretches of human beings out of whom no fruits of civilization have ever come. But we shall not lose hope. This is not all sand, this is fertile soil. All it needs is the water of life, the water which is supplied by the Son of God. The desert can be made to bloom. That is true physically, it is also true spiritually. All deserts, no matter where they are, can be made to bring forth fruit to the glory of the God who made them. Oh, the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God, Who is able to make the desert blossom as the rose!

IV.

BIRDS

LET me remind you at the start that I am not going to give you a lecture on ornithology. I have no ability as a lecturer, and I have no time to lecture. I am a preacher—a prophet. I am ordained to speak for God. My purpose is not to deliver a scientific dissertation on birds, for I know almost nothing of birds from the scientific standpoint. There are many men in this city who can speak to you learnedly about the nature and habits and value of birds. My aim is not to impart information. You can readily get that for yourselves. All the public libraries and all the bookstores have many volumes on birds, and special magazines and newspapers can tell you all you need to know. My sermon *is* a sermon —a spiritual discourse. My wish is that I may be able to open your eyes a little and your ears a little, and your mind a little to the wonder and beauty of the bird-world, in order that you may cry out with a fresh rapture: "O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth."

What a mystery a bird is! Tennyson, in one of his best known poems, has said that if he knew a little flower completely, in all its essences and relationships, he would know everything. But a bird is a greater mystery than a flower. It has higher potencies and wider possibilities. Little, timid, quivering, fluttering, scary thing, what is it but a ball of mystery wrapped up in feathers! How strange that a thing like that

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should come out of the earth! How remarkable that it should come out of protoplasm: that one pinch of protoplasm should be worked into a thing that swims, and another pinch into a thing that crawls, and another pinch into a thing that flies! How extraordinary that a bird should come out of the star-stuff! At first there was a great mass of stuff. Large pieces flew off and became stars, small pieces, tiny bits flew off and became birds. How amazing that a bird should come out of the fire-mist! In the huge ball of fire-mist the seeds of bird-life were hidden, and out of the mist there flew, in the fullness of time, a little creature with a spark of the primeval fire burning in its heart. Birds are the hottest of all creatures. They have a blood-temperature which would quickly burn us up.

But how could a bird come out of protoplasm, star-stuff, fire-mist? Only because it was, first, in the mind of God. From eternity the bird idea was in the Divine Mind. One day God said: "Let us make birds," and they were made. He said that before He said: "Let us make man." Birds are older than man. We sometimes look upon them as interlopers, troublesome intruders, saucy upstarts, but they were here long before the first man made this planet his habitation. According to a Greek tradition birds are the oldest of all created things. Before the sun and winds, before mankind, even before the gods, they were. And it was because they were supposed to possess primal powers and to reach back into ante-mundane times that soothsayers watched their flight and ministers of religion tried to find out from them the will of God.

Why did God create birds? A common answer is—He created them for man. That is pleasing to

our vanity, but it is hardly a tenable explanation of their existence. If birds were made for man, then why did they exist millions of years before man was made? Why did they fly and sing, age after age, when there was no human eye to see them and no human ear to hear them? And why, even to the present hour, do many of the most beautiful birds in all the world make their homes in thickets and jungles and mighty forests, and on uninhabited islands where the foot of man has never trod? Why do they flash their gorgeous plumage in the sun, and pour their melodies on the air, where there is no human heart to enjoy them? It is true that God made birds for man and it is also true that God made birds for Himself. He created them because He wanted them. He wanted them for Himself. He now shares them with man, but He wants them Himself. He likes them. He likes their plumage and He likes their song.

Abraham Lincoln used to say that God must like the common people because He makes so many of them. If that be a sound method of argument, then God must like birds because He makes so many of them. There are more kinds of birds than there are kinds of fish, and more than there are kinds of serpents, and more than there are kinds of animals. There are more species of birds than there are species of fish and serpents and animals combined. The largest of all the kingdoms of sentient life is the kingdom of the birds. I do not wonder that Jesus of Nazareth used to say: "Look at the birds!" God keeps His eye on them. Not one of them can fall without His noting its fall. Jesus felt that bird-life was a page in God's great Bible, and that by reading this page men would receive a message from their heavenly Father.

This leads us to another mystery—the majority of mankind are indifferent to birds. Men ignore them as unworthy of attention. Indeed, the human race may be said to be almost hostile to birds. Are there not societies organized for the express work of protecting them, and do not congresses and parliaments pass laws for the purpose of saving them from extermination? Mr. Hornaday, of our own city, set himself to raise a fund of $100,000 to save a particular kind of bird from extinction. In New York birds have decreased forty-six per cent. But most men are not hostile to birds, they are simply indifferent to them. They do not care for them, never think about them, never read about them, simply pass them by as uninteresting and useless. To be sure, there are exceptions. There are bird-lovers in every community, men and women who take unceasing delight in birds, and the number of these bird-lovers is increasing every year. But, at present, the majority of people are not interested in birds.

This is a mystery. Birds are easily seen. Fishes are not. Fishes hide. In order that fishes may be seen, the city must catch them and put them in an aquarium and carefully adjust the lights. It does not seem that fishes were created to be looked at. Serpents also hide. They conceal themselves in the grass, behind rocks, in holes in the ground, and even if we could see them we do not want to see them, for the sight of them causes a revulsion in our blood. But birds do not hide. They rise before us. They soar into the air. They wheel and circle above our heads, as if they would say: "Now you like to see men looping the loop, and performing other aerial stunts, just look at us! See how gracefully we can do these things,

and how easily and without danger at all." Birds do everything they can to attract our attention, but most of us refuse to look.

Not only are they visible, but they are beautiful. They are beautiful in form, in movement, in colour. The colouring of birds is one of the miracles of creation. In some of them the colours are splendid, in others they are gorgeous, in others they are positively dazzling. Oh, the delicacy and vividness of the patterns woven into the plumage of a bird! We think it wonderful when men can bring together bits of stone in such a way as to create those matchless mosaics in St. Peter's at Rome. We count it marvellous that men can create such designs as one sees in the priceless tapestries of the Vatican; but all these masterpieces of human artistry are poor, cheap, faded things compared with the splendour of some of the most common of our birds. When you want to see delicate shadings, exquisite gradations of colour, and artistic designs that cannot be matched in the studios and factories of men, go to the breast or the wing of a bird! There are more rich and vivid colours in the plumage of birds than you can find in the foliage of a landscape on a summer afternoon, more than you can see in the ocean when it breaks against the rocks and the sunlight is mingled with the spray, more than you will find in the sky, even when the day is breaking or when the sun is dying in the west. This colour in the plumage of birds is the Lord's doing, and it ought to be marvellous in our eyes. Feathers do not come together to form exquisite patterns with every line unbroken and every matching of colour perfect, without a superintending mind. But most of us do not care.

Birds, again, are vocal. It is difficult for birds to keep still. They are always chattering or twittering or chirping or calling or singing. They are so full of life they cannot keep silent. By their singing they say: "Please listen to us!" But we turn a deaf ear. Most of us do not care for birds.

And yet they follow us. They like us. They come into the city. They take possession of all our parks. Central Park, New York, has nearly one hundred and fifty different kinds of birds within its bounds every year. But birds are not aristocratic. They do not confine themselves to stately parks. They will visit your backyard—anybody's backyard—no matter how poor or mean you are, provided you have a tree or even a bush there. A woman in Chicago counted fifty-seven kinds of birds which in one year visited her backyard. Is it not strange that we should ignore them when they are so beautiful, so musical, and so friendly?

How many birds do you know? How many kinds of birds live in our city? How many are here in the winter, how many in the summer, how many all through the year? How many transients do we entertain in the course of every twelve calendar months? Birds are coming and going all the time, just as people are coming and going. We are interested in city life—well, bird-life is a part of city life, and most of us ought to know more about it than we do.

One object of this sermon, then, is to persuade you to pay attention to birds, to look at them, to listen to them, to think about them, to come to like them. This is one of your religious privileges, this is one of the means of grace. God makes the birds. They are parts of His ways. He has something to say to you

through them. If you ignore the birds, you lose a part of His message.

This sermon is specially for boys. Many boys do not think of birds. Because they do not think, they throw stones at them. A stone may break a bird's wing. A bird with one wing broken cannot use the other wing, and so it has no wings at all. A bird with no wings is helpless, ruined. It is in the same condition that a boy would be in if some one put out both of his eyes or cut off both of his legs. This sermon is specially for girls. Girls do not think about birds, and that is why some girls wear the dead bodies of birds on their hats. Some of the loveliest species of birds have become almost extinct because of the thoughtlessness and cruelty of girls and women.

This sermon is specially for grown-up people. None of us perhaps are as happy as we ought to be. We are not so happy as we might be if we were interested in a larger circle of things. Having eyes we see not, having ears we hear not, and having hearts we feel not the things we might see and hear and feel. The result is that we get old early. Nobody gets old so long as he is interested in a large number of things. All of us know men and women in the upper eighties or early nineties who are yet young, because they are interested in so many things. This sermon is to remind you that if you are not interested in birds you will get old before your time. This sermon is specially for the old, for the men and women who realize they are old, who find the days somewhat tedious and who lament that much of the zest has gone out of life. Let me suggest that you enter the bird-world. Buy one of Charles M. Chapman's books and go to work. Begin this summer. Begin to-day. Introduce the bird-

note into your life. You are going down the western side of the hill. Let the birds—God's choristers—sing for you all the way down until the shadow falls and you hear other voices sweeter still.

The bird-world is a fascinating field of study. One can devote his leisure hours to it for a lifetime and always have something new to learn. Every feature of bird-life is bewitching. The flying of birds—what a feat that is! Men have learned to fly in recent years; yet a sorry mess they often make of it. Look at the airplane! What a noisy thing it is! It makes a great ado, and every now and then it gets out of order, and comes tumbling to the earth, killing the man who is learning how to fly. But a bird thinks nothing of flying. A bird is God's flying machine. In the machine there is a little engine—the bird's heart—not so large as the tip end of your little finger. How tiny, and yet how mighty! It can carry the bird a thousand miles, two thousand, three, four, five, six thousand miles. Some birds spend their summers in the Arctic circle and their winters in Argentina. Twelve thousand miles a year they fly, just for the sake of being comfortable.

And how fast they fly—some birds a mile a minute, others, two miles a minute. Experts declare that certain birds can fly three miles a minute. Against what obstacles they fly—right in the teeth of the wind, straight through the storm, on they go to their destination. What energy is locked up in those little engines! The albatross is a mighty bird. It measures, sometimes, seventeen feet between the tips of its outstretched wings. It can fly day and night for three thousand miles, as fast as the fastest steamer can sail, sleeping on the wing, if it sleep at all, and at the

end of the journey be apparently as fresh as it was when it started. And it flies without any observable movement of its wings. In the presence of such a bird the heart cries out: "O, Lord, how manifold are thy works! In wisdom hast thou made them all!"

The migration of birds—you can study that for a lifetime. Many birds spend one season of the year in one country, and another season in a different country. The countries may lie thousands of miles apart. They lay out courses of travel and they follow these courses for thousands of years. They start south at the same time every year. They start north at a time that never varies. The experts can tell you almost to the day when certain birds will be here from the West Indies, when other birds will be here from Brazil, when still others will be here from Patagonia. They fly often at night. They fly in great armies. Sometimes they fly so low you can hear them shouting and calling to one another, at other times they fly high and can be seen only through the telescope passing across the silver disk of the moon. The tides of the ocean are wonderful, so certain, regular and mighty. But there are other tides, tides of feathered life, flowing north and south, with the regularity of the trade winds and the precision of the movement of the stars, and these tides of bird life have ebbed and flowed every year through all the ages of human history, and through uncounted millenniums before history began. "O the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out!"

The economic uses of birds—the millions of dollars they save us by making war on the enemies of our orchards and crops, this is an interesting study, and

a still more interesting study is the poetic uses of birds. What use did Homer make of them, Dante, Shakespeare, Wordsworth, Tennyson, Browning, our own American poets? Shakespeare, the world's greatest poet, apparently loved birds the best. Six hundred times in his dramas he brings them in, and sometimes with magic effect. In the love scene in *Romeo and Juliet,* in the moment of intensest passion a bird is heard and the maiden cries:

> *"It was the nightingale . . .*
> *Believe me, love, it was the nightingale."*

But Romeo better understands the notes of birds and his reply comes sadly:

> *"It was the lark, the herald of the dawn,*
> *No nightingale . . ."*

How did the Hebrew poets deal with birds? They saw in them a partial revelation of God. They noticed how birds will break up their nests and train their young ones to fly. So does God break up men's resting places. He wants men to soar aloft. The tenderness and solicitude and faithfulness of the mother-bird made a profound impression on the Hebrew heart. The downy softness, the warm tenderness, and the all-surrounding security of the protecting wings were hints, the poet thought, of qualities existing in the heart of the Eternal. There was an old poet of Israel who did not hesitate to think of God under the image of a bird: "He will cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust."

Birds are man's companions in every quarter of the globe, and yet they are removed from him by a gulf

both deep and wide. They do not come so close to him as a horse, or a dog, or a cat. They do not like to be held in the hand. They resent a caress. They cannot talk to us as a dog can. It is impossible for them to express in any way which we can understand what they think or feel or wish. They cannot look us in the eye, nor can we look into their eye. They look at us but they do not look into us. Matthew Arnold had a dog—" Rover "—and when Rover died, Arnold wrote no poem. He had a cat named " Atossa," and when Atossa died he wrote no elegy. He had a bird named " Matthias," and when Matthias died, Arnold wrote a poem expressive of his remorse and sorrow. His heart was pierced because he had not known the bird was going to die. He had not suspected even that the bird was sick. He had offered him sugar and cake and seed, and had spoken jocosely to the bird even when he was under the shadow of death, and it was this sense of ignorance and inability to understand a bird that wrung from Arnold's heart one of the most beautiful poems he ever penned.

But though we cannot understand them birds are company for us. They relieve our loneliness. They are comrades along the perilous road. They never forsake us. They are faithful to the end. One of the darkest features of the tragedy of human life is its increasing loneliness as the years multiply. One by one, our friends, our acquaintances, our companions in pleasure and work, leave us. The boys and girls we played with when we were children, our schoolmates, our friends of the early years, drop out, one by one, and we find ourselves attended by an ever diminishing company of those who care whether we are alive

or not. Charles Lamb was not an old man when he wrote:

"I have had playmates, I have had companions,
In my days of childhood, in my joyful schooldays—
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces."

Tom Moore was not aged when he wrote:

"I feel like one
Who treads alone
Some banquet hall deserted,
Whose lights are fled,
Whose garlands dead
And all but he departed!"

But he who makes friends with the birds will have them with him to the end. Birds never change. So far as you are concerned they never die. You probably never saw one die. You never saw its body after it was dead. There are just as many pewees and juncos, sparrows and swallows, orioles and robins as there ever were. And they do not change either their form or their colour or their voice. The robin will sing to you this summer just as he sang when you first heard him sing, and the whippoorwill will speak to you out of the dusk with the same accent which he used long years ago. No matter how old you live to be, when it comes time to die—if you die in the season of the singing of birds—if the window is open—you will hear the birds singing the same songs which they sang to you when you were a child. There are two things which never forsake us—the stars and the birds.

And although they cannot look into our eyes they can sing their way into our hearts. Martin Luther,

11277

in an hour of terrible depression, was lifted up and strengthened by the spectacle of a little bird swinging on a twig and sending forth a song of perfect trust. Thomas Carlyle walked one day to Edinburgh on a disagreeable errand, and on his way home his heart was heavy with care. But the larks rising and singing around him made him think of his father's house, and he was comforted. Dan Crawford, years ago, went as a missionary to Central Africa. He sat one day on a cliff overhanging a lovely lake, feeling as desolate as Robinson Crusoe felt before he found his man Friday. While he was pondering the fact that Scotland was four thousand miles from where he sat, suddenly there came the tapping of a woodpecker on a tree immediately behind him. "What a warm-hearted tap that is!" he said, and, at once, it seemed that Scotland was just round the next bend of the lake.

In one of the finest of his poems, Wordsworth tells the experience of a poor woman who went every morning to her humble work in a crowded part of London. On her way she passed a corner at which hung a thrush in a cage. When the thrush sang there came before her eyes the cottage in which she was born. She saw the path through the meadows along which she had tripped with her milk-pail when a girl, she saw the woods, the mountain, and the river. The whole scene of her childhood rose before her, as by enchantment, at the singing of this bird.

Charles Silvester Horne was one of the radiant and anointed spirits of our time. For many years he was Pastor of Whitefield's Tabernacle in Tottenham Court Road, London. He was elected to the British House of Commons and wherever he was, he was a champion of noble causes, the loyal servant of mankind.

Horne's death came when he was but fifty, and when he died a darkness fell upon the hearts of those who knew and loved him. It was a sad-hearted company which gathered round his open grave. They had lined it with moss and wild flowers, but they could not cover up the wound in their hearts. Mrs. Horne was there with her seven children, Horne's two brothers and his sisters were there, and a large company of men of distinction who had been his comrades in many a hard-fought campaign. When the minister began to read the committal service, and every heart was at the point of breaking, a thrush in the oak-tree poured forth a jubilant song. The human heart was not able just then to say: "O death, where is thy victory? O death where is thy sting?" and so God said it through a bird.

The most original poem ever written by an American bears the name of a bird—*The Raven.* It is by Edgar Allan Poe. The weirdest poem ever written by an Englishman telling the story of how a curse fell on a man for the killing of a bird, is *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner,* written by Samuel Taylor Coleridge. For days the hero's life was a long-drawn agony. Because of the softening of the man's heart the curse was finally lifted, and the poem closes with the noble thought:

"He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things both great and small;
For the dear God, who loveth us,
He made and loveth all."

V

SUNSETS

HOW many sunsets have you seen during this last week, this last month, this last year? How many have you seen in the last ten years, the last twenty, the last thirty? I do not ask how many have you glanced at, but how many have you gazed upon, paid attention to, pondered? On how many have you held your mind long enough for it to become impressed, for an influence to be diffused through your heart, for a discipline to be exercised upon your spirit? How many sunsets stand out vivid and glorious on the walls of your memory? How many of you can say, that the glory of setting suns is an appreciable factor in the development of your emotional and spiritual life?

It is a lamentable fact, that what is customary soon becomes commonplace. The oft-repeated soon loses its power over us. Repetition seems to sear the heart as if by a red-hot iron. If the sun went down only once in a hundred years what a world-wide commotion the sunset would create! If only once in a hundred years the western sky glowed and burned as though some colossal, celestial glory were about to burst through upon the world; if only once in a hundred years, the clouds along the western horizon took on unwonted brilliancy, flashing with a magnificence leaping beyond the power of language to express or the ingenuity of the human mind to conceive; if, only once in a century, after the sun went down, an ethereal softness began to steal toward the zenith, and an un-

Preached, May 23, 1915.

speakable beauty began to flush the upper spaces—then the fame of the spectacle would be heralded around the earth, and would give people something to talk about for another hundred years.

If such an event had taken place seventy-five years ago, how enthusiastically we should gather round the old men and women of eighty and eighty-five and ninety, begging them to tell us of the sunset which they saw in the days of their childhood. And how eagerly the reporters would harass these old people for descriptions of the great event of the long ago. And if we knew that there would not be another sunset until twenty-five years from now, some of us would be filled with sadness, saying one to another, "I am afraid I shall not live so long. I fear I shall die before I have seen that thrilling and sublime event!" Young people, however, would stand on the tiptoe of expectation, counting the passing years, reading the poets and historians for descriptions of the last sunset, and preparing their minds and hearts for the great experience awaiting them a quarter of a century from now. If a sunset took place once in a century, everybody would be interested in it, but such is the perversity of human nature that a sunset occurring every day loses its power to charm or thrill, and the majority of human beings now living on our planet pay no more attention to a sunset than do the animals at their feet. We never rightly value anything which happens every day. We cannot appreciate any blessing which we possess all the time.

Nor do we appreciate anything which we get for nothing. The only things we value highly are the things which we buy at a great cost. We should all enjoy the sunsets more, if we had to pay an admission

fee. If some enterprising showman could curtain off the western sky, and, walling in the edge of the world, should advertise in all the papers: "Beautiful Sunsets every evening next week—best seats ten dollars each; seats in the balcony five and four and three dollars according to location; gallery seats one dollar each," what a scramble there would be to get in! We should all want to go, and the ticket-scalpers would do a booming business. We should save up our money for this great treat, and we should ask one another: "How many times do you expect to go? Which sunsets have you seen this season?"—just as we now talk about grand opera. Yes; if it only cost something to see the sunset we should be eager to see it. But because an angel of the Lord stands in the glory of the blazing west, crying, "Ho, ye who thirst for beauty, come ye to the fountain, come, without money and without price," we turn on our heel and go away. We do not want things which are free.

And so, every evening of the month, thousands and tens of thousands of our people go from their places of business to their homes with never a glance toward the gorgeous west. They hastily eat their dinner. They return down town, paying for a place in the opera house or theatre in order to see the burning of some cheap chemicals, the dexterous manipulation of a searchlight or a few electric bulbs—ingenious tricks played with the mystery of light, cheap and tawdry flashes in a tin-pan—when God's great masterpiece of light and colour hangs all unnoticed on the western wall of the world.

The purpose of my sermon is to awaken in you the sense of condemnation, the consciousness of sin because of your neglect of this great feast of the Lord.

I would have you think of the sunset as a means of grace. Have you ever counted up the means of grace? How long is your list? What have you included? Public worship? Yes. Bible reading? Yes. Prayer? Yes. Is that all? Have you not put down the sunset? That is a means of grace. By all means, put that down. It is a sacrament. It is the visible sign of an invisible grace. It is a symbol for mediating God's grace to your heart. Put it down in the list of the means of grace; include it, also, in your list of sacraments.

Reckon it a page in your Bible. It is certainly a word of the Lord. It is not a word of man. Man cannot speak after that fashion. There are some things which God allows man to assist Him in making. If God wants a potato or a turnip, a cucumber or a squash, He allows man to help Him in producing it. If God wants a flower-bed or a lawn He allows man to collaborate with Him. But there are some things in which man can have no part. When God makes a sunset He says to man: "Now, please step aside; I want to do all this by Myself. You cannot in any way assist Me. This work is completely beyond you. I, alone, can produce a work like this." A father allows his little boy to do many things. He lets him run on this errand and on that. Some things he and the boy work at together. But, finally, the father says: "Now my boy, I must do this all by myself. All you can do is to sit down and watch how I do it." God alone makes the sunset. He allows man to run on many an errand, He collaborates with him in many a task, but when evening comes the heavenly Father says: "Now my child, sit down, and see how beautiful I can make a sunset!"

It is a means of grace, it is a holy sacrament, it is a page of the Bible, and yet many of you turn away from it. I know you are ready with excuses. You say you do not live in the right quarter of the town, or you live on the wrong side of the street, or you live in an unfortunate part of the house. If you lived anywhere else than where you do live, you would look at the sunset every evening! And others of you tell me you cannot see the sunset because of your work. Your work is not over until after sunset, or you are on your way home at sunset—and who can see a sunset in the subway or in our narrow streets? Or you are a woman and you must prepare the dinner when the sun is going down, and if you neglected the dinner in order to see the sunset you would have more clouds in the house than there are in the western sky. I know your excuses. They are all plausible, but not one of them is sound. We are all experts in making excuses. Whenever God prepares a feast and asks us to partake of it, we all, with one consent, begin to make excuse. It is not because of where you live, or because of your work that you see so few sunsets. It is because you do not care for them. They do not appeal to you. They do not increase the sum-total of your joy. You can get on well without them and so you do. But if you wanted to see them you would go out of your way, you would plan, you would sacrifice to see them.

The sun sets at different times in different seasons of the year. You are not always at work, not always in the subway, not always in the kitchen when the sun is going down. If you do not live in a home with a western outlook you could walk to Riverside Drive, or you could walk to the end of the street in which you are living, and stay there long enough to see the sun

go down. And if you could not do that on any other evening of the week, you could do it on Sunday evening. You could put down the sunset as one of the features of your Sunday worship. Or, if you could not do this on every Sunday evening, you could make it a habit to devote a half-hour every evening to sunsets during your summer vacation. If you only wanted to see the sunset and believed that it had a blessing to impart, and that your life is impoverished because you see so few sunsets, you would make it possible to see more sunsets this year than you have ever seen before.

Let me suggest a few reasons why you ought to give more attention to the sunset:

In the first place, it is a miracle. Many persons are much troubled by the miracles of the New Testament. They cannot believe them. In the first place they never saw them with their own eyes, and not having seen them, they cannot accept them, and, moreover, the idea of a miracle seems to clash with the scientific conception of universal and unchangeable law. For these two reasons many men and women of culture and high intelligence are loath to give credence to the New Testament accounts of miraculous events. Let me suggest to all such persons that you close your New Testament for a season and look at a miracle performed before your eyes. The day of miracles is not passed. God will perform one for you if you will open your eyes and look. The sunset is a miracle, according to the New Testament idea of a miracle.

There are four words used in the New Testament for the extraordinary deeds of Jesus. The first is "wonder." They were called wonders because they excited astonishment in the eyes of all beholders. Men

were amazed and dumbfounded by what they saw. Now if a miracle is a phenomenon which arouses amazement then the sunset is a miracle. It will surely stir up astonishment in any mind which dwells upon it, it will amaze anybody who picks it to pieces and finds out how it is made. It is a wonder!

Another New Testament word for miracle is "sign." A miracle is an event which points to something, it is a token of something, it is a symbol of something, it is a pledge of something, it is an indication of thought and purpose. It points to something beyond itself. Certainly the sunset does that. It is a signboard painted on the flaming highway of the gorgeous west, pointing to God!

A third word is "power." The things which Jesus did are sometimes called "powers," that is, they are displays of power. They give the impression of a power at work beyond the strength of man. The sunset fulfills this idea. The sunset is a power—a display of power, running beyond the reach of human faculty. No man can make the sunset, no set of men can make it. Not all the men of all the earth, with all their talent and all their genius, and making use of all the apparatus and machinery which man's ingenuity has been able to produce, can create the vast and dazzling splendour of a western sky. A sunset is a power. A display of force running beyond the energy of mankind is a miracle.

A fourth word is "work." Sometimes the New Testament writers call the deeds of Jesus "signs," sometimes "signs and wonders," sometimes "signs and wonders and powers," and sometimes they content themselves with the word "works." A miracle is a work—a mighty work; and surely the sunset is a

work—a mighty work. It is something achieved, done, brought to pass. A sunset, then, fulfills every condition of a miracle which the New Testament lays down. Look, then, at this miracle which God Almighty performs every day before your eyes. It is not done contrary to law. No law is broken by the formation of the clouds, by the colouring of them, by the movement of them. All the vibrations of the ether, the dancing of the dust-particles, the movements of the air-currents, take place according to law. God achieves the sunset through law. A miracle is not a violation of law. No law is said to have been suspended or broken by the men who wrote the New Testament. All the wonderful deeds of our Lord were done through law!

The sunset is a parable. A parable is a verbal picture used in order to set forth a spiritual truth. All our Lord's parables are pictures. *The Prodigal Son, The Good Samaritan, The Foolish Virgins, The Sower, Dives and Lazarus*—what are they all but unfading pictures, hung in the gallery of the mind, not to be taken down for ever? Our Lord loved to speak in parables, and on some days He spake in no other way. He loves to speak in parables now. One of His favourite parables is the sunset. It is a picture, setting forth a spiritual truth. The fact which it proclaims is that God is a lover of beauty, God is fond of colour, God is an artist. There is no parable recorded in the New Testament which makes that fact so vivid and impressive as the parable which God speaks daily in the sky of the west.

The sunset is a medicine. Shakespeare says that sleep is a balm for hurt minds. So, also, is a sunset. It is soft and tender and beautiful, and that is what

we need at the end of the day. In the morning we are courageous and jubilant, but the cares of the day sap our vitality, and we often come to the evening hour with strength depleted and much of our vim and zest gone. Life which was spangled in the morning becomes in the late afternoon a dingy drab, and so God hangs up a beautiful picture to cheer our heart a bit. Just when the beauty is fading out of life, God gives this great splash of colour to create hope and joy again. When we begin to stagger under life's routine and monotony, God sets the western sky on fire to make the world romantic again.

The New Testament says that sometimes Jesus did His most wonderful cures at sunset. It was when the sun was hovering over the horizon, and the poetry of the dusk was stealing into the air, that the people carried out their sick ones and laid them at His feet. It was when the necromancy of the sunset was at its height, that streams of healing flowed from Him into the exhausted veins of men. Every evening He takes His place on His throne in the west, and e'er the sun goes down we should bring out our weakened faith and shadowed hopes and wounded affections, and lay them at His feet, allowing the glory of the sinking sun to shine around about them, and give us health and strength again.

The sunset is a mystery. Did you ever hear a scientist talk about the mechanism of a sunset? You can read all that up some time for yourselves. My sermons are not scientific lectures. They are not scientific expositions, but sermons, their inner purpose being the purpose of all true sermons—the moving of the soul toward God. But if you should hear a physicist talk to you about the sunset, he would sur-

prise you by his declarations. He would tell you that the sunset is made of a few gases, a multitude of drops of vapour, millions of particles of dust, and a handful of sunbeams. He would go on to assure you that the gorgeousness of the sunset is due to atmospheric dust. The earth is tied up in a dust-bag. An ocean of dust flows round our planet several miles deep. The dust particles nearer the earth are large and coarse. But as you ascend they become smaller and smaller, until at last they become microscopic, and in the highest regions they are so small that no instrument can detect them. We know of their existence solely from the effects they produce. If it were not for this dust, the sky would not be blue and the sun would not be golden. If it were not for the dust, the sunset would be shorn of its glory.

Why is the sun more beautiful on the horizon than it is above our heads? It is because we see it through more air, and that means we see it through more dust; the more dust the greater scope for reflection and refraction, and the operations of all the other principles by which the potential glories of light are unfolded. The sunsets near great cities are usually red, and this is because of the dust. The red waves are longer and stronger than the yellow and orange rays, and much longer than the green and the blue, so that it is oftentimes only the red waves which shoulder their way through the dust-ocean and succeed in reaching the eye. Why is yonder cloud so gloriously white? It is because of the dust-particles in it. They are reflecting the light. Why are its edges gorgeously crimson or purple? It is because of the dust particles which are refracting the light.

What a mystery it is that a thing so resplendently

beautiful should be made of vibrations, and dust-particles and the movements of vapour. By reflection and refraction, and radiation and absorption, every dust particle obeying one law, and every vibration obeying another law, and every air-current obeying still another law, this stupendous miracle comes to pass.

A sunset is a revelation of God. It reveals His infinite resources. It lights up for us the idea of infinity. A sunset is one of the most transitory of all creations. It is shorter lived than the flower of the field. In the morning the flower grows up—in the evening it is cut down and withered. But a sunset grows up in the evening and is cut down in the evening. Its entire life covers but a few minutes. You have known a child to draw a picture on a slate, and rub it out, draw another and rub it out, draw still another and rub it out. But he soon gets tired and lays down his slate. God draws a sunset and rubs it out, draws another and rubs it out, another and another and another, and rubs them out. He has been doing this for thousands of years, tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands, millions, ten of millions, possibly hundreds of millions of years, every evening of every week of every month of every year. For hundreds of millions of years a sunset, and no two sunsets alike, "since the morning stars sang together and the sons of God shouted for joy"! I have studied sunsets for many years, and I have never seen two alike. One summer I made a record, day after day, of the features of every sunset, and there was not a reproduction or a repetition in the entire series. In the sunset you are certain to get something new. A sunset is like a romance: you never know how it is coming out. You may have seen five

hundred sunsets, and the way they concluded; but you cannot tell what God will do with the sun this evening.

You get, also, in the sunset, a revelation of the character of God's mind. It reveals to you His intelligence, the æsthetic element of His nature. You all, doubtless, have experimented with oil paintings of the impressionist school. You have gone up close to the painting, and held your eye only four or five inches away. What a daub it was! No proportion, no perspective, no beauty, no trace of mind, no hint of intelligence, no indication of a lofty end, nothing but gobs of paint. It seemed as though some boys might have smeared the pigments on the canvas in fun, or as though a dog with his tail drenched in paint might have produced just such effects by wagging his tail against the canvas, or as though the wind, saturated with colour might, in blowing over the canvas, have deposited these blotches and scabs. Certainly it gives no evidence of an intelligent and rational soul. But now stand back—a little farther—still farther. Ah, now! You are at the right focal distance, and you see that it is a painting, it is a picture, it is a landscape—a glorious landscape. There is proportion, perspective, outline in it; there are delicate shadings, exquisite gradations in it; and as you look upon the beautiful creation, you feel you stand face to face with the artist's soul. Only intelligence, skill, and a soul in love with beauty, could ever have created a work like that.

Stand near to a sunset and what do you see? Examine it through the microscope of science and what have you? Vibrations, dust, aqueous vapour, air-currents. That is all. It seems as though these things might have been swept together by the wind, as though it all might be due to a fortuitous concourse of atoms,

as though bits of matter might have fallen into a meaningless hodgepodge. But wait! Stand back! Farther back! Now look at it! A picture! Outlines such as no artist ever sketched—cathedrals, minarets, spires, ancient castles, majestic palaces, towers, domes, more majestic than those of which any architect ever dreamed. And colours—oh, what colours! Delicate tints, exquisite hues, artistic shadings, bewitching gradations, combinations of lights and shadows such as never entered into the heart of man to conceive. Ah, this is none other than the work of God—the work of the Infinite Artist. If Moses took off his sandals in the presence of a burning bush, well may we bow our heads and hearts in the presence of a sky all aflame with God!

Our generation needs the sunset. We need the refining influence of its quiet, unsurpassable beauty. We are growing coarse, civilization is brutalizing the heart. We love the blaze and bang of things. "Let us have a good time," says one man to another. "What shall we do?" "Let us go to Coney Island." That would be the answer given by tens of thousands of people in New York. A good time is time spent amid a lot of cheap attractions, the glare of lights, the blare of noise, enjoying things which are of the earth earthy. "Let us have a good time!" "What shall we do?" "Let us go to a big hotel, and have a fine dinner, where the music is like the music at a circus, and where women dance all the time you eat." The heart is becoming benumbed by the deadening influences of modern life. How few people there are who can have a good time by themselves: who can sit enraptured in the presence of the ineffable tenderness and ethereal loveliness of the sky!

We need the sunset for consolation. We need to be comforted. In his famous hymn, Reginald Heber speaks of a country in which "every prospect pleases and only man is vile." Yes, Nature is everywhere and always beautiful. Look over a landscape from any hilltop. Beautiful! Stand on the prairie and look toward the horizon. Beautiful! The mountains are beautiful and so are the hills. The rivers are beautiful and so are the lakes. The ocean is beautiful; there is one beauty in the silence of the central sea, and there is another beauty near the shore where the tide beats itself into spray on the rocks, and the spray catches the sunbeams and holds them as if loath to let them go. Look into the heavens at morning, at noon, and at evening—nothing but beauty the whole day long! Look again at night. The beauty has changed only in this—that it has been raised to a higher power. "Every prospect pleases." Every view delights the eye. Every look rejoices the heart. "Only man is vile." It is man who breaks down our faith, darkens our hope, tramples the life out of our love. It is man who makes us doubt the goodness of God. It would be easy to believe in God if it were not for men.

Let us, then, spend more time with Nature. The trouble with us is that we spend too much time with men. We get the daily paper between us and the setting sun. Every evening the streets are filled with newsboys. Everybody wants the last edition. We read it at sunset. Go into the elevated trains—everybody is reading the evening edition. Go into the subway—everybody reading. Nobody thinking of the sunset, nobody thinking of God, and so we get feverish and despondent and our hearts are filled with bitter

feelings, all because we think too much about men. Let us get God's evening edition. He publishes an extra every hour of the day, but the evening edition is the best of all. It is the one which He prints in purple and gold. In this one He gives us fresh assurances of His love. It would be well for all of us if we read the newspapers less, and paid more attention to God's last edition which He flings down to us every evening from the printing presses of the sky.

Let us, then, come back to the idea with which we started. The sunset is a word of God. He gives some things to our mouth, other things He gives to our ears, other things He gives to our eyes. He gives music to our ears. Music is one of the languages of the heart. You cannot remain in a room in which music is being played without your mood being affected. You may be reading, or working, or listening to a conversation, but underneath it all that music will be speaking to your heart, and the currents of your emotional life will be changed. Colour is another language of the heart. Just as music reaches the heart through the ear so does colour reach the heart through the eye. It changes one's mood. We cannot remain unaltered in the presence of colour. Beauty does not allow us to remain what we were. God, through the colours of the western sky will bring us, if we let Him, into the tranquillity and sweetness of a Christlike mood. Man cannot live by bread alone, but by every word which proceedeth from the mouth of God, and one of His great words is the sunset. "The heavens declare the glory of God: and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language where

their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun."

"Day is dying in the west;
Heaven is touching earth with rest;
Wait and worship while the night
Sets her evening lamps alight
Through all the sky."

"Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts!
Heaven and earth are full of Thee;
Heaven and earth are praising Thee,
O Lord Most High!"

VI

STORMS

THE subject of my sermon is storms. We do not know much about them from experience. We are living in a part of the world in which we have few storms. They come only occasionally, and when they do come they are, as a rule, quite small. Even the most furious of them are nothing compared with the mighty storms which visit many sections of our planet. If we have a storm of unusual violence we talk about it for twenty or thirty years. But while our storms are infrequent and also diminutive, we do not like them. Many of us are offended by them. We say: "I do hope it won't storm." After a little squall has passed we say: "What a terrible storm!" We put down a storm as an intruder, an interloper, a disturber of our peace, an upsetter of our plans. We class it among our enemies. We group it with the snakes, the brambles, the briars, and other things that torment us and make us afraid. It is because we do not like storms and have paid so little attention to them, that it may be profitable for us to think about them in the house of God.

What is a storm? If you asked me to suggest a definition it would be this: an extensive and violent disturbance of the air. Not every disturbance is a storm. Limited disturbance or a gentle disturbance would not be a storm, but a breeze. It might be a draught, or a zephyr. A disturbance must be both

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extensive and violent in order to create what people call a storm. A storm is always made of agitated air. It may put on different suits of clothing, but when you strip it, you will find nothing but air in a state of disturbance. It does not matter what clothing the storm puts on (and it will put on anything upon which it can lay its hands). If rain-drops are abundant, then it clothes itself in rain, and we call it a rain-storm. If there are snowflakes at hand, then it wraps itself in snow, and we call it a snow-storm. If there are grains of sand present, then it dresses itself up in sand, and we call it a sand-storm. If there is a great deal of electricity present then it wraps itself in thunder and lightning, and we call it a thunder-storm. When a storm moves out from the land upon the sea, it will, in certain cases, tear a strip off the ocean, and wrap that strip of the ocean around it, in which case we call it a waterspout. But, in every case, the storm is really agitated air.

Storms are among God's earliest creations. There were storms long before men existed on the planet. They are older than the animals, the birds and the fish, they are older than the grass and the trees. Ever since man has been on the planet he has had to live with them, and from the beginning he has been more or less afraid of them. One of the reasons why man, for so many centuries, dreaded the sea was because the sea was the home of fierce storms. He did not venture very far from the shore because of his dread of meeting a storm. From the beginning man has been awed by them, and the most sensitive men have been most profoundly impressed by them. But there have always been men who have delighted in storms. They have felt in the midst of the storm a thrill which came

to them at no other time. The poets from the beginning have taken pleasure in describing the phenomena of the storm. Some of you remember the storm in *The Iliad* of Homer. Some of you have not forgotten the description which Virgil gives us in the first book of *The Æneid:*

"South, East and West with mixed confusion roar,
And roll the foaming billows to the shore.
The cables crack; the sailors' fearful cries
Ascend; and sable night involves the skies;
And heaven itself is ravished from their eyes.
Loud peals of thunder from the poles ensue,
Then flashing fires the transient light renew:
The face of things a frightful image bears,
And present death in various forms appears."

Shakespeare, again and again, makes use of storms. I would suggest to the young people a very pleasant way of spending a part of their vacation: Turn over the pages of Shakespeare and see how the storms move through his dramas. Read *Julius Cæsar,* and see how the poet prepares for the climax of the great tragedy by telling you all about "a tempest dropping fire." Read *Macbeth* and see how wild the night was when Duncan was slain. The greatest of all Shakespeare's storms is the storm in the midst of which poor, old King Lear pours out the agony of his broken heart. There is nothing sublimer or more awe-inspiring in all Shakespeare's tragedies than the picture of King Lear in the midst of a storm. The storm of the human heart is there projected against a storm of the air. Byron was great in his description of storms. Read his *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* again, and see how skillfully he can manage the lightning and thunder. The Hebrew poets also tried their hand. If you want

a graphic description of a thunderstorm read the eighteenth Psalm. The Hebrew heart was very sensitive to the majesty of storms. They looked upon the winds as servants of the Almighty. One of the great declarations of Hebrew poetry is: "He makes messengers out of the winds," and in the one hundred and forty-eighth Psalm when the poet is calling on the different parts of creation to come to church and worship the Eternal, he calls upon the fire and the hail, the sun and the vapour, and then he calls for the stormy wind fulfilling God's word. "Come," he says, "O stormy winds, and praise the name of the Lord."

The wind has always been a symbol of mystery. Our Lord talking to Nicodemus, uses the wind in that way: "You hear the sound of it," He said, "but you do not know where it comes from, and you do not know where it is going." Equally mysterious is this spiritual experience which the soul of man must pass through. It is a remarkable fact that it was not until the beginning of the nineteenth century that men began to study storms scientifically. Up to that time they had known about them externally, they had been inspired by them or frightened by them, but it never apparently occurred to anybody that it was possible to understand a storm. The first scientific book ever printed upon winds was published in the year 1801, the first year of the nineteenth century. But from that day to this the study has been carried on with increasing vigour and enthusiasm, so that meteorology has become one of the most fascinating of all studies, and there are thousands of observers scattered over the earth that are making a special study of storms. Men of science have now taken the storm into the laboratory, they have put it on the

dissecting table, they have thrown it into the crucible, they are finding what it is made of, and how it is possible for us to adjust our lives to it.

The whole story of the investigation reads like romance. We now know where storms are born. There are various cradles scattered over the earth. One of them, for instance, is the region west of the Mississippi, another is the Gulf of St. Lawrence, another is a little south of Ireland, another is in the Philippines and out of these cradles one storm after another proceeds. Science tells us that there is a large variety of storms. The variety is indicated by the number of names that we use. We speak of the tempest, the hurricane, the cyclone, the whirlwind, the tornado, the typhoon. Every storm has its own behaviour, and that behaviour is carefully noted. Some storms are regular, and come at regular periods, and others are irregular. Some storms move northeast and others move southeast. Many storms move along certain tracks just as express trains do. You can tell in advance where a storm of a certain type is coming out. But there are other storms which are capricious. They move in one direction a certain distance, then change the direction. They move with a certain speed up to a certain point, and then their speed is accelerated or it is retarded. They often play jokes upon the weather-bureau man. He announces, with all gravity, that a storm is going to appear on a certain day. It does not arrive because the storm apparently changed its mind and turned either to the north or the south. The weather-bureau man says it will arrive at a certain hour, but for some inexplicable reason the storm hastens its speed and arrives six hours ahead of time, or it seems to grow weary and

lags behind, arriving several hours late. A storm seems to have as many dispositions and tempers as human beings have. It is hard to predict anything about some of them.

The causes of storms have been the subject of prolonged investigation. We are living, as you know, at the bottom of a great ocean of air, which is never in a state of equilibrium. Upon this air-ocean the sun is always throwing down great quantities of heat. This heat throws the ocean out of equilibrium. Some parts of the air become heated and rise. When they rise they flow toward the north. This leaves a vacuum in the south. Great currents of air proceed to fill up that vacuum so that the lower strata of air flow southward and the upper strata of air flow northward. All the winds would blow north and south were it not for the rotation of the earth. This deflects the course of the storms, and in one hemisphere they move to the northeast and in the other hemisphere they move to the southeast, all because the earth moves more rapidly at the equator than anywhere else. So that if you want to account for the behaviour of the storm you must take into consideration, not only the heat, but the rotation of the earth, and not only this but the forces of gravity and the forces of magnetic induction, and you must take into account numberless electrical attractions and repulsions.

Thus every storm is the resultant of a great many different forces that contribute to make it what it is. But the most wonderful thing that science has discovered about storms is that they are all obedient to law. It was once supposed that comets were lawless —that they whisked their tails in our faces whenever they chose, but the astronomer has discovered that

every comet is as subservient to law as the sun itself. It was once supposed that storms were utterly reckless, tearing frantically across the face of the earth, amenable to no sovereignty whatsoever. But it is a demonstrated fact that no storm ever breaks the law. Every storm is what it is and moves where it does, in absolute obedience to law. And when I sit down with these books that tell us about all this—about the magnetic induction and the electric attractions and repulsions—and when I look at the diagrams that set forth the nature of storms, and when I consider the marvellous way in which they are generated and in which they move, I cry out in the language of Paul: "O the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out! . . . For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever."

A storm is the clearest of all the revelations we have of God's power. Nowhere else in the universe do we get so impressively the idea of limitless power as we get it in the storm. The stars do not impress us with God's power; they are quiet, scintillating points of light projected on the softest of blue backgrounds. When we stop to meditate about the size of them, we arrive at the idea of power, but the stars themselves do not make us sensible of power. Nor do the mountains: they are quiet, sleepy masses of granite basking in the sun. If we meditate upon the way in which they come up, we arrive at the idea of power, but the mountains, themselves, do not indicate to the mind the idea of power. Nor does the ocean—in its quiet moods. It is beautiful, even sublime, because of its size and its depth; but it is only when the wind

tramples on it and makes it mad that the ocean gives us the idea of power.

The only phenomenon in the world of Nature, other than wind, which gives us the conception of power is the cataract. Water leaping from lofty altitudes has a wonderful capacity for impressing and awing the heart. Some of you know what the heart feels when you stand either above or below Niagara, and some of you know how wild and terrific is the leap of the Yellowstone River in the canyon that bears its name. But even in the presence of the greatest cataracts, the idea of power is not driven so far into the soul as it is by a storm. When you see great masses of water falling, there is a regularity about it all, and you feel that the strength is measurable, that the power can be computed. But when a storm tears across the earth you are face to face with power that cannot be computed and that it is impossible to curb or restrain. When the wind rushes at the rate of two hundred miles an hour it strikes a feeling through the heart different from that which any cataract, however great, can inspire. And when the wind raises its speed to three hundred or four hundred or five hundred miles an hour, sweeping everything before it, we gaze upon the mightiest manifestation of power presented anywhere in the heavens or on the earth.

There is nothing that the wind cannot do. The proudest edifices erected by man are only cardboards to it. It can pick suspension bridges from their piers and toss them aside as though they were so many straws. It can tear up trees by the roots or twist them off many feet above the ground. There are few sounds so piercing as the shriek which an oak gives when the storm twists it to death. Anybody who has

ever heard an oak die in a storm, has taken into his soul an experience which can never be obliterated. There is a strikingly significant sentence in one of the Psalms: "He breaketh in pieces the cedars of Lebanon." The Hebrew poet was impressed by many wonderful things that the Almighty could do, but he could conceive of nothing more amazing than this—His power to break into pieces the cedars of Lebanon.

It is in the midst of the storm, therefore, that man learns anew his absolute helplessness. When the sun is shining, man sometimes begins to strut and thinks himself a wonderful being, or vaunts himself upon the solidity of the things which he can create; then a storm comes and lays flat his proudest buildings and tears to pieces the most solid of his creations and blows away, as if they were only so much thistledown, the heaviest of his possessions. The wind is a great revealer of God's power.

The storm also presents a great problem to faith. Storms are destructive, both of property and of life. Storms have no pity, no mercy. Ever since the Great War began many of us have been sorely distressed because of the cruelty of the methods of warfare pursued. The practice of drowning men, women and children in the ocean who were not combatants at all, and were entirely innocent, and who had done nothing whatever to deserve their fate—that has struck consternation and agony through the heart of mankind. But to the thoughtful mind that kind of a problem is always on hand; that sort of a tragedy has been perpetuated through all the centuries of human history. The winds are God's messengers, says the Psalmist. Well, if they are they do amazing things!

They make no distinction: they sweep into eternity men, women and children, the innocent along with the guilty. They have sent to the bottom of the sea thousands of men and hundreds of billions of dollars' worth of property. They have swept across the land and crushed to death human beings by the tens of thousands. They have destroyed man's crops, blown his home into fragments, killed his wife and his children. You would suppose that the winds were messengers of a fiend.

If you want to read some of the most appalling pages in the history of the world, then read the history of a dozen of the world's great storms. Read the account, some time, of the two great storms in the month of August in 1780 that swept over the West Indies, two of the most frightful visitations that this earth has ever known. Scores killed in one place, two hundred, three hundred, six hundred in another, in one place fourteen hundred invalids and wounded persons crushed to death. Thousands of buildings levelled to the earth, the labour of generations wiped completely out. Or, read about that terrific storm of October 31, 1876, which sent a tidal wave from ten to forty-five feet deep into the mouth of the Ganges, drowning a hundred thousand human beings. Or, read the account of the great tornado that tore its way through the City of St. Louis, May 27, 1896, destroying thirteen million dollars' worth of property in a few minutes. Many of us still remember distinctly the consternation in the national heart caused by the terrific storm which overwhelmed Galveston in 1900. There had been many a storm that had crossed the Gulf of Mexico but never a storm just like that one. For some unaccountable reason that

storm made at once for the City of Galveston, and its people were helpless in its awful embrace.

Is it true that God makes His winds messengers? What are we to say about these storms? Certainly man has nothing to do with them. Man is responsible for much, but he is not responsible for storms. If there be any God at all, they would seem to be His. He must be responsible for their conduct, He must be held accountable for what they do. And what have they done? They have worked devastation and ruin for thousands of years. It is hard to understand why God should permit thousands of tons of food to go to the bottom of the Atlantic when so many of His children are starving on land. That is a problem that storms present—why should God permit His messengers to send incalculable treasures to the bottom of the sea when men are so poor on the land?

It is only when we sit down with a problem like this that we begin to understand the need and the value of faith. The Bible is all the time reminding us that we must walk by faith and not by sight. We do not always understand just what that means. A storm helps us to understand it. Is there a God who created the universe and who rules it? There is evidence that there is, and there is also evidence there is not. Does He take interest in man, or is He absolutely indifferent? There is evidence that He is interested, there is also evidence that He is not. Is He a good God, or is He a malicious God? Does He take delight in blessing men, or does He take delight in torturing them and killing them? There is evidence that He is good, there is also evidence that He is a demon. The way is open, and you must choose.

In mathematics, we are coerced to a conclusion. If you put two and two together, you have four. You cannot have any other result. If you throw a stone into the air it falls—you are compelled to admit it. If you put your hand in the fire it burns, there is no denying it. But in the realm of religious truth it is always possible for you to deny. You must walk by faith, it is impossible to walk by sight. The existence of storms makes this abundantly clear. The poet says in one of our hymns:

"Dark is His path on the wings of the storm."

Yes, His path is indeed dark and nowhere is it so dark as on the wings of the storm. If we listen to the storm we must walk by faith and not expect to walk by sight.

This shows us why it was necessary that Jesus should come. Nature is not sufficient to show us God's heart. For reasons which we do not understand, the operations of Nature are such that the Eternal Pity cannot be clearly revealed through them. We need a more complete revelation—we need Jesus Christ. Before He comes, the scales are almost evenly balanced. There are reasons for believing and there are reasons for doubting. He comes, and He inclines the scales toward God. He comes up out of this universe of mystery and darkness, and is so beautiful and gentle and loving and sweet, that in spite of the storms we feel ourselves justified in believing in the goodness of God.

What, then, is the supreme lesson which we are to get from the heart of the storm? It is the old, old lesson which Job received centuries ago. You will re-

member that at the end of that wonderful poem we are told that God spoke to Job at last out of the whirlwind, and this is what He said: "Look at the mysteries of the natural world. Can you understand this? Can you understand that? Can you understand this other? Of course not. Well, if you cannot understand the mysteries of the physical creation, why should you be surprised that you cannot understand the mysteries of the spiritual universe?" It was in the cyclone, in the power of it and the behaviour of it that Job found the mysteriousness of the universe reaching its climax, and when he thought about his absolute incompetency to deal with the mysteries around him, he said: "I have been talking about things which are too wonderful for me, I have been trying to explain things which I cannot understand. I have got a new revelation of God. I had heard of Him by the hearing of the ear, but now I have a new revelation of Him, and therefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes."

VII

SHADOWS

IN this sermon I want to think with you about shadows. I like to take something that is familiar and common, something which you have at your door and which it is not necessary for you to travel half-way round the world to find.

Shadows are the most ethereal and insubstantial of all the phenomena we have thus far studied. There is nothing so light and so thin and so bodiless as a shadow. You cannot pick one up with the fingers of your hand. If you pick it up at all, it must be with the fingers of your mind. A shadow weighs nothing. You throw it on the scales, but you cannot weigh it—it has no weight. I have often wondered what a kitten thinks when, for the first time, it pounces down upon a shadow thinking that it is going to catch something, and suddenly discovers that there is something in this world into which a kitten cannot get its claws!

And so a shadow has become a metaphor, and has a fixed place in our English speech. We have many words expressive of that which is infinitesimally small, but when we push language to the limit, we use the word shadow. A mother says to her little boy: "You had not a shadow of an excuse for doing that." She might have said: "You had not an atom of an excuse, or a splinter, or an iota, or a scintilla, or a trace of an excuse." But if the mother wishes to say the strongest thing that it is possible to say, she uses the word "shadow." When we have not the shadow of an

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excuse we have no excuse at all. When you push human thought to the vanishing point, then you fall back on the word "shadow."

Not only is a shadow ethereal and insubstantial, but it is also evanescent. It is constantly changing. It lives for a little time and then passes away. You look at it and turn your head away, in a moment you look at it again, and it is changed; it is longer or shorter, it is thicker or more slender. A shadow cannot possibly remain an hour the same. A shadow is as changeable and as fidgety as a little child. You look at a shadow and go away for a season, and when you come back it is gone. That shadow will not come back again. It has gone for ever. A shadow is not only empty but it is also fleeting. Shakespeare understood the weight and worth of English words as probably no other man has ever understood them. When he uses a word for the expression of a certain thought we may be sure that it is the best word that can be chosen. There is a fine and faultless fidelity in his choice of words. When it dawns upon Macbeth that life is empty and also transitory, what is the first word which Shakespeare puts into his mouth? "Life's but a walking shadow." That tells the whole sad story. Shakespeare goes on according to his fashion piling word on word in order to deepen the impression, but when he comes to the end of the sentence he can say only this: "signifying nothing." All had been told in the word with which he started.

Now shadows are the children of God. They are His creation, they are foreordained by Him. You cannot conceive of a universe like this without shadows in it. There cannot be a universe with the sun and moon and stars, and the planet revolving on its axis,

and moving beings on the surface of the planet, without shadows. The Eternal planned a universe with shadows in it. He said: "Let there be shadows," and shadows there were. When He looked upon the completed universe the writer of the first book of the Bible says: "God saw that it was good." This means that He saw that the shadows were good, they enhanced the beauty of it all. And all these shadows are obedient to God's eternal law. There has never been a disobedient shadow since the world began. All of them have been obedient to the God who created them.

I love to look through books which I have no time to read. Life is too short to read many books, but there are many books which are worth looking through. I am especially fond of books dealing with mathematics. I love to look at pages of formulas, great masses of stuff which I have not wit enough to understand. But simply looking at it does me good. It makes me feel proud to know that I belong to a race which is capable of doing such wondrous things. And one of the books through which I love to look is a book on shades and shadows. That is the sort of book that an architect loves and an artist ponders. In these books I find that shadows can be computed. Under certain conditions shadows will be of a certain length and a certain breadth and a certain colour. It is possible for the whole problem to be worked out by applying the principles of geometry. Every shadow is cast according to law. If you could pick up a shadow from the street and carry it into a laboratory, you would find that it would not vary a hair's breadth from what it ought to be.

In this respect, all shadows are alike. We talk a good deal, in these days, about internationalism.

There is an internationalism of shadows. All the shadows of the world constitute one great brotherhood. God has made of one all the shadows of the earth. The shadows in Asia are like the shadows in Africa, and like the shadows in Europe, and like the shadows of both the Americas, and like the shadows of Australia, and like the shadows of all the islands of the sea. All the shadows, in every land, are obedient to the same laws, and these laws are the laws of the Eternal.

Here is a wonderfully interesting fact if you stop to ponder it—that in all the thousands of shadows that play in our New York streets, not one of them is disobedient to the law of God. These shadows are children of the Most High. They play every day in our crowded streets. The automobiles run over them, but they do not cry. They are as deathless as the Eternal, and every one is absolutely obedient to the regulations of the King of heaven. Look down Fifth Avenue, some day, at the proper time, and notice the thousands of shadows. Every lamp-post, every pole, every house, every policeman, every moving pedestrian, every carriage, every automobile, every horse, casts a shadow. What a wonderful thing that law is over all! The rainbow is according to law, and so is the Milky Way, and so is the shadow of the little girl playing on Fifth Avenue.

I was riding down one of our avenues the other afternoon with a friend, in his automobile, and I suspect that he did not notice a single one of the many shadows over which he passed. I was looking at them all the way. I noticed them because this sermon was in my mind, and the sermon in my mind made my eye keen to observe shadows. That is one

of the purposes of a Nature sermon: it makes one's eyes keen to things that would otherwise pass unnoticed. All this summer through, not a person reading this sermon will fail to notice more than once the play and beauty of the shadows. A Nature sermon adds a province to the great kingdom of our observation.

Since shadows, then, are the children of the Most High God, they are also His obedient servants. They fulfill His will, they do the thing for which they have been created. I have been looking through *The Psalm Book* during the last week, and I am convinced that it is defective. *The Psalm Book* has no proper appreciation of the ministry of shadows. The Hebrew poets are very sensitive to the beauty of many of the forces of Nature, and when they call upon the universe to worship God they name thunder and lightning and hail and sleet, snow, stormy wind, hills and mountains, trees and seas, sun and moon and stars, but there is no Hebrew poet so far as I can now remember who ever called upon the shadows to come into the Temple and lift voices of praise to the King of heaven. The Hebrew poet was impressed by the fact that the winds could be God's messengers, but he did not reach the point at which it was possible for him to see that the Divine Will can also be fulfilled by shadows. It will be worth our while to think of at least three of the ways in which shadows fulfill the will of God.

In the first place they enhance the beauty of the world. What would a picture be without shadows? Take the shadows out of any picture, and the picture is for ever spoiled. Take the shadows out of a landscape and it is flat and insipid. Why is it that noon is the least interesting of any portion of the day? Prose

writers may talk of noon, but poets hardly ever do. There is nothing poetic in the noon. The poets sing of the morning and the evening, and the reason they sing of morning and evening is because the mornings and evenings are beautiful; and the reason mornings and evenings are beautiful is because mornings and evenings are the times of shadows. The day grows increasingly beautiful as it approaches its end. Life becomes increasingly rich as it draws to its close, and it is largely because the shadows are lengthening. As night comes on, the shadows become richer and more purple, and something passes into our soul which the noon cannot give. It is in the evening hours, before night comes, that the heart becomes more mellow and tender, and the angels of our better nature come out and sing.

Who does not love the twilight? Who does not love the deepening dusk? We speak sometimes of the gloaming. We love the gloaming because of the richness of the shadows. I have many times gone to Boston from New York on a morning train, and the journey is an interesting one because it carries one through the middle of the day. I am always impressed by the beauty of the country. But when I start for Boston at four or five in the afternoon of some lovely day in June, the whole country looks like fairyland because of the play of the shadows. There are shadows lying across all the streams, there are shadows on the surface of all the lakes. Every little pond throws a picture into your eye as you pass. The only perfect time to travel is during the hours immediately before the night falls. When the shadows are all around you, you feel that you are in a land of enchantment.

I had a friend, once, who was very sensitive to

beauty. He was one of the most delicately organized men that it has ever been my fortune to meet. Like many another high-strung man it was difficult sometimes for him to sleep, and so in order to quiet himself it was his custom to walk up and down the avenue on which he lived, lined with great trees, and to study the shadows on the pavement. The moon has a wonderful fashion of turning pavements into silver and of using leaves as so many patterns with which to embroider beautiful figures on the silver. And my friend would walk up and down that avenue by the hour, feasting his soul on the beauty of the shadows in the street. And when he used to talk to me about this feast of beauty I felt ashamed, for I had walked that same avenue many times and had never noticed a solitary shadow. In the presence of a man like that I felt as much beneath him as I feel that my dog is beneath me. If it had not been for that man, the chances are I should never have preached this sermon on shadows.

But shadows do more than simply minister to the æsthetic part of our nature. They are genuinely useful. Long before man had mechanical ingenuity enough to fashion a clock or a watch, somebody had wit enough to make use of a shadow by means of which to tell the time of day. Nobody knows when the sundial was invented, but we can trace it back through many centuries. Before the days of clocks and watches men could tell how the hours were going simply by watching the passing of the shadow round the dial. It is said that even to the present time, travellers in the Arabian desert who are not the owners of watches, find out what time of day it is by the length of the shadow they cast upon the sand. It is neces-

sary for the pious Mohammedan to pray at certain times each day, and instead of consulting a watch he stands up against the sun and by the length of the shadow which he casts upon the sand he finds out when the time of prayer has come.

One of the most useful of all the shadows is the shadow of the moon. When the shadow of the moon falls upon the earth we call it an eclipse. There was a time when an eclipse of the sun was one of the most terrifying of all phenomena. Men cried out in consternation when it came. They were in an agony while it lasted. Not understanding the cause of it they assumed it must be the creation of some deity who was angry, so they quaked and shuddered as long as the shadow lay across the land. But by and by, the astronomers discovered the cause of the eclipse, and now it is counted one of the greatest blessings of which astronomers know. The eclipse of the sun is looked forward to with happy anticipation, and preparations are made months in advance in order to get the full advantage of it. Men are willing to travel halfway round the earth in order to get into advantageous positions so as to study the sun and the moon when the shadow falls. Many things about the sun we have learned because of this shadow, and many things about the moon, and also many things about the earth, which would have remained unknown probably for ever, if God had not ordained that now and then the moon's shadow should fall upon the earth. And so you might say that an eclipse is a great black bag full of secrets. Science has untied the string by which the mouth of the bag was closed, and has poured out the secrets before our eyes, so that we now know things about the sun and earth and moon of which the ancients never

dreamed. All this knowledge came to us through a shadow.

Shadows are also fountains of refreshment. When man is hot and weary, he can cool his fevered brow by bathing in a shadow. Probably the greatest orator Israel ever produced was Isaiah. His literary style is stiff as cloth of gold; he is full of wondrous images, but not one of his images is more beautiful than this: "As the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." He is describing the Messiah, the long-looked-for man who is to bring relief to the weary world. In the Orient, they appreciate shadows as we do not do here. In Palestine, the sky is often without a cloud, and the sun beats down with pitiless intensity. In many parts of the land there are no trees and therefore no shelter from the sun at noon. In those regions the only shelter obtainable is that from a great boulder in the field. The weary traveller who has trudged along the dusty road, hour after hour, sees the boulder in the distance, and the very sight of it brings new courage to his heart. When at last he arrives at it, he throws himself down in its refreshing shadow, and out of that shadow receives strength sufficient to carry him to his journey's end. That is the picture that was in Isaiah's mind when looking down the years he saw the Messiah. He was to be like " the shadow of a great rock in a weary land."

Man is travelling across a desert, and the desert is sometimes blazing hot. Mankind is always on the point of withering, wilting, fainting because of the intensity of the heat of the day, and the Hebrew prophet thinking of the refreshment which the Messiah was going to bring, could think of no lovelier and more restful image than this: He shall be

"as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." There is a shadow which all of us are in love with—that is the shadow cast by the earth. Night is but a shadow, and at the end of every day, we creep round and throw ourselves down in this shadow and go to sleep. God takes the blanket of the night—and what is the blanket of the night but a shadow?—and this our heavenly Father spreads out over us and tucks it carefully in round us, and says to us, "Now, you may go to sleep." God giveth His beloved sleep, but we could not sleep so well were it not that He covers us with a shadow.

And if the shadow of night is our friend, we have a right to believe that the shadow of death is our friend. When the Hebrew poet thought of death it did not affright him. He knew it was only a shadow, and a shadow with refreshment in it. "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil," because the same God that is over us through the night will be with us in the midst of death. After we pass into that shadow we shall be refreshed.

Why do we have shadows? It is solely because of the existence of light. If there were no light there could be no shadows. The more light the more shadows. The intenser the light the deeper the shadows. One of the reasons why the Grand Canyon in Colorado is so indescribably beautiful is because of the richness of the shadows, and the richness of the shadows is due to the extraordinary luminosity of the heavens above the canyon. In that marvellous atmosphere the sun has a potency which he does not have in our sky, and the wonders he works far surpass any of the wonders which we know. Not a little

of the indescribable loveliness of the canyon is due to the richness of the many-coloured shadows with which it is filled.

It was once my fortune to be in the city of Athens in the month of August. Athens, as you know, is a city of white. The Athens sky is often without a cloud, the sunlight flooding the streets of the white city producing a glare which almost dazzles the eyes. I was profoundly impressed, not only by the sunlight, but by the intensity of the shadows. There is a shadow which now lies across the world. It is a shadow cast by the late war. War is nothing new in this world. There has been war, so far as we know, from the beginning. But never has war cast a shadow comparable in blackness with the shadow which now lies on mankind. There have been military generals in all centuries—a thousand red-handed butchers have caused the earth to run red with blood, but never before has the world been under a shadow so deep and so awful as the shadow which oppresses human hearts to-day. How can you account for that? The only explanation is because of the intensity of the light. There is more of the light of the God of love that shines in the face of Jesus Christ than there has ever been in this world before. And it is because of the intensity of that light that we have the awful blackness of the shadow. The Indians once inhabited the land which is now ours. They were always fighting, but their wars cast no shadow because America in those days was dark. It is only because of the light that falls on us from the face of God's only begotten Son that war casts a shadow which lies like a beam of night across the tortured heart of the world.

And so there are two kinds of shadows: a shadow

that refreshes and a shadow that oppresses, a shadow that enlivens and a shadow that deadens. Simon Peter cast a shadow that healed. That is a wonderfully interesting incident recorded in the fifth chapter of the book of *The Acts,* where we are told that people having invalids in their homes brought them out and laid them on beds and couches along the streets through which Peter was to pass, hoping that his shadow might overshadow them. Simon Peter stood between Jesus Christ and the world. The man who stands with the light of Christ on him will cast a shadow that has healing in it. You and I, if our attitude to the Eternal be right, will cast a shadow that will bring health and strength to all on whom it falls. I hope that this sermon may be a sermon casting a shadow (like that of Peter's) on you wherever you go, and that out of its shadow you may derive health and strength and peace.

VIII

SOUNDS

IN this sermon we take a new departure. I invite you to come with me into the world of the ear. Our theme is "Sounds."

I should like at the start to divide sounds into two classes—noises and tones. A noise is usually loud, disagreeable and meaningless. A tone is a modulated sound, and it expresses something. I wonder if it would be correct to say that there are no noises in Nature. Nature has only tones, while noises are confined to the human world. For instance, the murmur of a brook is a tone, one of the most soothing and delicate of sounds, a dainty and exquisite form of music. There is no sound at all like it in a city. Compare the tone of a brook with the clatter and racket of an elevated train. The latter is noise. Or, compare the breaking of crockery with the breaking of waves. The first is discordant and disagreeable, whereas the latter is soft and brings pleasure to the heart. When a wave slips up on the sand and breaks there, it gives forth a sound which the ear loves. Or, compare the whispering of leaves with the uproar of a machine-shop. The clank of the machinery deafens us and makes us want to get away, but there is no sound more agreeable than the sound which the wind makes in the tops of the trees. Nature produces tones —the human world creates noises.

You are probably thinking of an exception. You think of thunder, and you say: "That is noise." I wonder if it is? It is loud, but is it disagreeable? It

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is disagreeable to many of us because it is associated with lightning. We are afraid of lightning, and that makes us dislike thunder. But if we could have thunder separated from lightning, I believe we should love it. It would be like a deep bass tone of an organ—it would be the rumble of the chariot wheels of God along the highways of the skies.

And so men find themselves exclaiming: "Oh, that I could get out into the fields!" Why? Because of the beauty there? Not entirely, but also because of the quiet. We love the fields because there are no noises there. "Oh, that I could plunge into the woods and stay there a whole week!" Why into the woods? Because they are fragrant? That is only one reason. There is a deeper reason. We love the woods because of their delicious quiet. There are no noises in the woods. "Oh, that I could get down by the sea! Give me a cottage by the sea, with the windows all open day and night!" But it is noisy by the sea! No it is not. The sea roars. Yes, it roars, but its roar is not the roar of the street. Byron was right when he said: "There is music in its roar." The voice of the ocean is soft. There are no jagged edges. It is huge, but it is velvety. You can lie down and go to sleep with the huge voice of the ocean lying in each ear.

Nature is never silent. She *cannot* be silent, because she is so intensely alive. She is always doing something. She is always saying something. There is no such thing as silence on the face of the earth. In the book of *The Revelation* John says that "there was silence in heaven for the space of half an hour." No such half an hour was ever known on earth. There are always voices in the ear. I never knew what

silence is until, one day, I went into the Mammoth Cave of Kentucky. The guide left me for a minute or two and I had a chance to listen to the silence. I had never heard it before. At first it was wonderful, then it grew to be terrible, and then it became horrible, unendurable. I do not believe a man could live long in absolute silence without going insane.

We are not created for silence. We live in a universe which is always saying something. We live, and move, and have our being in an ocean of sounds. We hear only an infinitesimal fraction of them all. We say, of some people, that they are hard of hearing. We are all hard of hearing. Not one of us hears a fraction of what is going on. Our senses are dull. Even the eye is stupid. It cannot see a million beauties which lie all around it. We see only a few colours. The eye can catch light vibrations up to seven hundred and twenty-seven trillions a second, but beyond that it is impotent. We can see violet, but all the colours above violet are beyond us. Millions of colours are hidden from us. If we could come back sometime with new eyes, we would not recognize the old earth. It would be a billion times more beautiful than we had ever dreamed. All that we see is only a tiny island in a measureless ocean. The ear is still duller than the eye. It is exceedingly clumsy. As soon as a sound passes twenty thousand vibrations a second, the ear begins to balk. At twenty-five thousand vibrations per second, most ears are out of commission, and at thirty thousand per second, the ear is completely undone. There are millions of sounds which the ear never reports to the mind. It cannot. The truth is, we are almost deaf. All that we hear, is as a small island, in the midst of a measureless sea.

Our civilization does not help us. Our education does not carry us forward. Progress seems to atrophy the ear. We do not hear so well as barbarians—not nearly so well as savages. The Indians who lived here when Henry Hudson called on them had ears far keener than ours. We are not even the equals of the animals. We speak of the inferior creatures. How they must laugh at us! They can see things we cannot see, and hear things we cannot hear. Walk through the woods with a dog, and you are at once aware of your limitations. He is alive to things of which you know nothing. As compared with you, he is, in certain points, a superior creature. Many of us make ourselves worse than we need to be. We do not cultivate our ears. Like all other senses, the sense of hearing can be wonderfully improved. We lose more than we know through our sins of omission. We do not cultivate the auditory nerve. We rob ourselves of pleasure which God intended us to have. Two men take a stroll through the woods. One hears nothing but the crows. They are the end men of Nature's minstrel-troop. Their coarse jokes can be appreciated even by the dullest intelligence. But the man by his side can hear, not only the crow, but also the thrush, and the cedar bird, and also the thousands of twitterings and chirpings and gurglings and purlings and murmurings and ripplings and tinklings on which, as on an ocean, the whole creation seems to float. Sounds are arranged in strata. There are some sounds as big as cobblestones. When they strike the ear-drum, we know that they exist. Under these there are sounds much sweeter, no larger than little pebbles. And under these there are sounds sweeter still, sounds which may be com-

pared to tiny shells, and underneath these there are what ought to be called microscopic sounds, infinitesimal particles, the dust, as it were, of sound. Blest is the man who in Springtime can catch up at least a few of the musical vibrations which lie at the basis of the world!

The sounds of Nature would deafen us if they were not so soft. Lear in speaking of Cordelia said, "Her voice was ever soft, gentle and low." We may call Nature, God's Cordelia, and Humanity is His Goneril. The voice of Goneril is shrill and rasping. Cordelia's voice is ever low and sweet. The worst feature of a great city is its noise. Noise is an enemy of life, and it is amazing that so little has been done as yet to conquer it. We have subdued a thousand enemies, but this furious foe still lords it over us. You can measure the civilization of a city by the noises it submits to. My professor in philosophy used to deny that man is a rational creature. In our self-complacent moods we like to think he is, and we pride ourselves on our use of the reason. But my professor did not relish such optimism. He claimed that man is not yet a rational creature. He is a candidate for rationality. He may become rational if he works and grows, but he is not rational yet.

I have sometimes wondered if we have not gone too far in claiming to be civilized. Is not that word too ambitious, too pretentious? Certainly we are not civilized yet—if you give the word any worthy significance. If we were really civilized, we should never submit to half the noises by which we are afflicted in this city. No city that is truly civilized would allow an elevated railroad to run through it. To compel women and children to sleep along the line of such a

road is an atrocity. A civilized community would not permit it. If we were civilized, the orchestras in half the hotels and restaurants of this city would be sent to the Tombs as disturbers of the peace. If we were civilized, these loud-mouthed hucksters who scream the prices of strawberries and turnips, would all be sent to Sing Sing. And if our civilization were more than skin-deep, these noisy villains who shout out "extras" with nothing in them at ten o'clock at night, would have been incarcerated long ago. The noises which we permit prove that we are yet in the lower stages of barbarism. When the world becomes civilized, the cities will be quiet. The cities will sit at the feet of Nature and learn of her.

The sounds of Nature are soft, gentle and low. The voice of water is a gentle voice. Water never stands still if it can help it. It wants to run in order that it may make music. A brook is always vocal. The poets say that a brook sings, and the poets are right. A brook laughs when its feet are tickled by the impertinent pebbles. When water gets a chance it falls. A waterfall gives forth a refreshing sound. When you find, somewhere in the woods, a little waterfall, you want to sit down by the side of it and listen to its music. There is something in the sound of falling water which banishes care and brings refreshment to the soul. Even a gigantic waterfall is restful. Niagara's voice is soft. Billions of drops of water roll their tiny voices into one huge sound, but the sound retains its softness. The mighty cataract wraps you up as in a blanket. There are no rough edges, no ragged ends, nothing to scratch or cut or lacerate. There is soothing in the roar of Niagara. Rain is one form of falling water, and different rains have

different voices. Rain upon the roof gives forth one sort of music, and rain upon a lake gives forth a music that is different. And rain upon the grass produces a music which is different still.

One night, last summer, I heard something in the grass outside my bedroom window, and I said: "Who is there?" At once the reply came back: "It is the rain. I am just watering the grass," and I said: "Oh!" and then went to sleep. In the morning I began to think of what happened the night before. I thought of the humility of the rain, and its unostentatious way of doing things. If a man wants to water a few square yards of lawn, he gets a hose and squirts and squirts, and makes a fearful ado over his little job, ending, at last, both wet and tired. But the rain will take a township or a county, or an entire commonwealth, watering thousands of acres of grass, and do it easily and quietly, saying softly: "I am just watering the grass." It is the softness of it all which is surprising. Nature is so gentle. She runs about in velvet slippers as though she were a nurse in a hospital, and one can almost hear her saying: "Poor people, I know you are tired and sick—all worn out by the fearful noises of the city—and it is because I know how sick you are that I make just as little noise as possible!"

The wind is no less musical than the rain. The wind is the big boy of Nature. The wind is never still, and the wind is always bent on having a good time. The wind loves to play with everything that it passes. It is especially fond of trees. To the wind a tree is a big toy, and the wind loves to convert a tree into a harp. The leaves are the strings, and from these the wind strikes forth music. It plays with

every sort of tree. Some one has suggested that if our ears were only cultivated we could distinguish the different tones produced by different trees. We could tell the tone of an oak from an ash, and the ash from the beech, and the beech from the birch, and the birch from the elm. The wind loves them all, and plays on them all, and which one of them does he like best? I wonder! All the tones are soft, and to lie in one's bed, at night, and listen to the wind in the trees is a joy.

When we enter the world of animate things, the variety of the sounds increases. There is a vast world of insects, and another vast world of birds, and in all of these worlds streams of sound are perpetually flowing. Spring is especially vocal. I wonder why Spring is the favourite month with a majority of people? Is it not because it is so rich in sounds? Nature seems bursting with life, and she has more to tell you than she can possibly express. A thousand sounds float through the fields and the woods, and many of them come from baby forms of life. Living things by the million are there in their cradles, and those numberless and scarcely audible melodies and harmonious warblings and whisperings are the cooings of the babies in the great Nature nursery. It is these immeasurable and indescribably sweet cooings which find the corpuscles of our blood and set them all dancing.

The most musical parts of the day are morning and evening. No one can afford to sleep late in the country in the summer time. Every June, when I go to New Hampshire, Summer meets me at the station and says: " Poor man, I see you are all cut and bleeding. The jagged noises of the city have left you in

a deplorable condition, and I am going now to wrap you in a blanket of bird-notes, and every morning and every evening I am going to apply to your ear-drums a poultice of beautiful pulverized sounds, and I think in a short time you will be completely well again." How I love the morning! What an orchestra I have. I feel like a king. I wonder sometimes in what world I am. After floating on a sea of iron vibrations through Autumn and Winter and Spring, I feel in Summer that I am drifting on an ocean of vibrations soft as gossamer. I am supported and carried on by the soft and tiny notes of birds. The age of iron has gone. A heavenly age has come, and the elevated trains and the iron hoofs of horses cease from troubling and the weary heart has a chance to rest. There is only one loud voice in the morning—the rooster. It stands out clear and distinct from all the others. He has lived so long with people that he has taken on some of their brag and strut. A rooster is not a part of Nature. He is a feature of our human world. His voice has been coarsened and loudened by human contact. The voices of Nature's birds are all gentle, low and soft.

It is not till evening that Nature brings out her full orchestra. I do not know how many pieces are in it, for it is invisible. Richard Wagner, in his opera house at Bayreuth, would not allow his orchestra to be seen. He was an artist. He could hear as few mortals have ever been able to hear. He would not allow the eye to interfere with the ear. He refused to permit the eye to break the illusion which the orchestra was creating, and so he hid the orchestra out of sight, thrusting it under the stage so that the audience could not see the shirt-fronts of the first violinists or the

puffed cheeks of the men who were blowing the horns, or the antics of the men who were pounding the drums, or tapping the triangle.

Wagner got the hint from Nature. Nature hides her orchestra. I do not know how many instruments there are in the great orchestra which plays for me on the evenings of July and August. A grand opera orchestra has about eighty-five pieces, sometimes the number is increased to one hundred, and occasionally, at extraordinary functions, two or three hundred instruments are brought together. But Nature never stops with such paltry numbers. She has four hundred, five hundred, six hundred, sometimes one thousand instruments in her orchestra. All the performers play by ear, and their music is wonderfully soothing and soft. It is said there are less than sixty symphony orchestras in the United States. These are in the large cities, and only a small fraction of the population can ever hear them. But God is desirous that every one shall hear music, and so He stations His own orchestras all round every city, and one in every village, and in every hamlet, in the neighbourhood of every farmhouse throughout the land, that all His children may have the culture which comes from listening to good music.

All this suggests various piercing questions: Why these sounds? Why these orchestras? I have spoken of my orchestra. It plays for me, but does it play for me alone? It would be flattering to my vanity to say it did. One might know at once that it was a man who wrote the story of the Garden of Eden, because he placed man at the top. He put everything under him. Even the sun and moon and stars were created to serve him. That is the way of man. It is

natural for us to think that all the inferior creatures exist for us. But I cannot bring myself to think that my orchestra exists for me alone. It plays when I am not there. It was playing before I was born. It will keep on playing after I am dead. It is playing for some one else besides me. I wonder if it plays for the bird creation and the insect creation and the animal creation? Does the whippoorwill enjoy the bullfrog, and does the bullfrog take delight in the owl, and does the owl revel in the music of the katydid, and is the katydid enraptured by the music of the cricket? Do these musicians play for one another, and do they have ears enabling them to enjoy harmonies which lie beyond our reach?

Why should it be deemed incredible that God should provide for the æsthetic enjoyment of all His creatures? We have got far enough along in our religious thinking to see that He provides food for all His creatures in due season. Why should we hesitate to believe that He provides music for all His creatures? It may be true for birds and insects, as it is for us, that they cannot live on bread alone, but must live on many words which proceed from the mouth of God. It may be that the music of the morning and the evening is for human beings, and also for creatures which belong to a different order. Possibly we ought to go further and say that these orchestras play for God. He created all these creatures. The orchestration is all His. He taught the musicians how to play. They play for Him. He is the King. We overhear. If that be true I can understand why I like this music. I like it because God likes it. I am created in His image. I like the things which He likes, when I am living at my best. I like the music

of the evening woods and fields, and it is then I am at my best. Care is rolled away—troubles no longer vex me. Engagements do not call me. I can live. And when I am living at my best I like the symphony concert of the fields. God no doubt likes it too. We enjoy it together. That is why my enjoyment is so high and sweet.

And so, in the sounds of Nature, we have a revelation of the Almighty. God is so great He cannot report Himself to the eye alone. He rolls the universe up to the eye-gate of the soul, but the eye cannot take it all in. There are things which cannot be told to the eye. The eye falls down saying—"Glory and blessing and honour and dominion to Him who sits on the throne." Other things must be told to the ear. When the ear receives the story, it too falls down saying, "Blessing and honour and glory and power to Him who sits on the throne."

A picture is a form of beauty. God lays it before the eye. Music is a form of beauty. God lays it before the ear. But God tells the ear something He cannot tell the eye. We know that God is a God of power. We can see it by looking at the ocean. We know He is a God of beauty. We can see it by looking at the flowers. We know He is a God of order. We can see it by looking at the stars. But I want to know more than this. I want to know if He is gentle, if He is tender? To know this, He must speak to me. A mother can show her little child something of her tenderness in her eye and in her smile. The baby can catch some of her kindness through its eyes. But when tenderness reaches its climax the mother speaks, she hums, she sings. She can tell more of what is in her heart through her voice than in any other way.

Alma Gluck tells us that when she was a little girl, and all her family were poor and hungry, her mother used to sing her to sleep. That is what mothers do, all the way round the world. When their babies are tired and fretful, they sing to them. They close the gates of the day with a tone, and there is no tone so sweet as that which a mother makes when she is singing her baby to sleep. It has become a saying in all languages: "Sweet as a mother's lullaby." Through the sounds of Nature, God sings to us. In this way He tells us of His gentleness and tenderness and love.

It is said that Helen Keller, when she was taken for the first time into a cemetery, burst into tears. She was blind and deaf. Nobody had told her about cemeteries. Nobody had informed her that the carriage, on that day, was to roll into a city of the dead. But when she found herself inside the gate of the cemetery, she knew she was in some place where she had never been before, and began to cry. Things are said to us which do not pass through the ear. There are sounds too ethereal for the ear to take note of. They are caught up by the spirit. When I get into the woods, I am sometimes so inexpressibly happy that I stand in amazement at my own rapture. I cannot account for it. It is not caused by the birds or the trees or the wild flowers. It is not due to the fragrance or the sights or the sounds. My explanation is this: Somebody is saying something to me—something wonderfully pleasant. Somebody is saying: "I love you!"

IX

MISTS

IN my previous sermon we were thinking about "Sounds." In this sermon I am going to direct your attention to something that is incapable of sound. A mist has no voice, it never speaks. It is a deaf mute. This is an impressive fact when you remember that the mist is always moving, and that nearly everything that moves makes a noise. A mist moves and it gives forth no sound. A mist can move down one of the streets of our city without letting you know, so far as your ears report, that it is present. It is many times the size of a furniture van, and yet it can glide over the cobblestones without making a noise. A little motor cycle puffs and snorts and makes a great ado as it goes on its way, but a mist as high as the Singer Building can travel from Harlem River to the Battery without making a sound. It seems almost human, and says: "Poor New York, you are plagued enough already by your noises, I will not add another sound to your bedlam."

Mists walk through our streets in velvet slippers. A mist makes no noise upon the water. Nothing else can move upon the water without making a sound. A ferry-boat splashes and churns the water into foam. It cannot move without making a sound, nor can a tugboat move three yards without announcing the fact to both banks of the river. A submarine cannot move even below the surface of the sea without making a noise. That is what led to the defeat of

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that little devil. Its propellers always made a noise, and so the Allies improvised ears for their destroyers, so that every time a submarine moved a destroyer could tell where it was. If the Germans had only known how to make a silent U boat the outcome of the war might have been different from what it was. If Germany had been able to get rid of the vibrations of the propellers, then the stream of war might have been turned into a new channel. The mist can travel from Sandy Hook to Albany and not make a sound.

Mists are also silent in the fields. They travel across the meadows, through the valleys, up the hills without making the slightest noise. I have got up at night often to see them from my window, and have been deeply impressed by their noiselessness. They climb over a stone fence without dislodging a stone, they move under the boughs of the apple trees without crackling a twig, they walk over the tops of the trees without bending a leaf. They seem almost like ghosts, spectral spirits of some other world. There is something uncanny in their silence. "Where are you going?" I have sometimes called after them, but I never received any reply. This fact becomes all the more impressive when you remember that it is a fact old as the world. Mists are among the oldest of the earth's inhabitants. Mists were made before man. Possibly you have forgotten the second chapter of *Genesis*. In one verse we are told that a mist went up from the earth, and in the next verse we are told that man was created. In other words, the mist was made first, and then man. The mist was permitted to stand at man's cradle, but it stood there dumb. Job says that when the cornerstone of the earth was laid the morning stars sang together. There is no Bible

writer that has ever suggested that the mists ever sang. Millions of them have existed on the earth, and the earth, perhaps, has existed millions of years, and yet from the Creation to the present hour, no mist has ever given forth a sound.

This is all the more remarkable when you bear in mind that water everywhere is vocal. Water likes to speak. Water will speak whenever it has a chance. Rain, for instance, always makes a sound. A dashing rain makes a large sound, a rain falling upon a tin roof is easily heard, a rain falling upon blades of grass, upon the leaves of trees, also gives forth a sound. Rain-drops falling on the petals of roses make a sound. You may call that the whisper of water. Is there a sweeter whisper in all the world? A brook is always full of sound. If a brook did not speak the poets would not like it. It prattles, it babbles, Tennyson says it chatters. It will coo and prattle all the day long like a baby in a cradle. A brook that does not speak is abnormal. Rivers also are vocal, especially when they leap from a precipice. When they leap they laugh or they shout. The Montmorency River, for instance, laughs when it jumps. The Yellowstone River shouts when it jumps. A river in the act of jumping always seems to cry out at the top of its voice—"Look at me, I am leaping!"

The ocean, also, is vocal. It is never content to be still. On hot summer afternoons, as it glides up on the sand, it hums a soothing tune. It bellows and thunders and roars whenever a storm teases it. Now a mist is a form of water, but water in the form of mist never speaks.

Moreover, you cannot compel it to speak. If you poke a fire it sputters, if you throw a stone in a lake

you make a splash, if you strike any metal you bring out a sound. You cannot bring out a sound from a mist. You may stab it, club it, trample upon it, and still it is silent. Even when the wind shoves it to the right and the left, harasses it and insults it, it still remains dumb. The wind may tear it to pieces, but it makes no reply.

The impressiveness of the silence of the mist becomes almost tragic when you bear in mind what the voice of water is. The Beloved Disciple, when he sought for a symbol to picture the voice of the omnipotent Jesus, chose the voice of water. The exile on Patmos listening to the music of the Divine Voice heard it and said that it reminded him of water. Of all the thousands of sounds on the face of the earth the only sound which was chosen as the fittest symbol for expressing the timbre of the voice of the Eternal, was the voice of water. A mist, although water, cannot speak. It would almost seem as though God had pronounced a curse on the mist. The Bible says that God pronounced a curse on the serpent: "You shall go on your belly," He said. To the mist He said: "You shall wander round the world, but never shall you be permitted to speak."

Now let us pause long enough to find out what a mist is. According to the dictionary, a mist is water-vapour suspended in the air and visible. There is much water-vapour in the air which is not visible. Water-vapour that cannot be seen is not mist, but whenever the water-vapour which is suspended in the air becomes visible, we have a name for it, and the name is "mist." Now there is a family of mists, and each member of the family is called by a different name. Some morning on going down the street you

say: "How hazy it is!" Haze is a mist, a thin mist. Some other morning on going out of the front door you say: "How foggy it is!" Fog is a mist, a thick mist. Here then we have three sisters—haze and mist and fog. The first is thin, the second is medium, the third is thick; but all are mists. There is another member of the family, and this fourth member of the family does not live on the earth, it lives in the sky. A cloud is a mist, and it differs from a haze and a fog in the fact that it inhabits the regions of the upper air. You might say that a mist is a cloud that has fallen upon the earth. You might say that a cloud is a mist which has ascended into heaven. We are interested, however, just now, not in the cloud; we are interested in the three sisters who make their home on the earth.

First of all, let us think of the beauty of a mist. There is a wide variety of colours. Some mists are white and some are green, some black, some blue, some purple, and some crimson—all the colours of the rainbow are exhibited in the world of mists. Mists are also of different textures. Some mists are coarse and others are fine. The London mist, for instance, is often exceedingly coarse and black. The mist that fills the streets of Edinburgh is a fine mist, entirely different in texture from the mist of the English metropolis. The forms of the mists are beautiful, and moreover they are always changing. The Greeks had a god whom they called Proteus. The wonderful thing about him was, that whenever anybody laid hold of him, he immediately changed his form. That is what a mist is always doing. Whenever the wind puts its hand on it, it immediately assumes a different shape. But all the forms of the mist are picturesque.

What do you suppose the mists are for? I sometimes think that they are the playthings of God. Has it ever occurred to you that our Heavenly Father is a playing God? I think we are entirely justified in assuming that He is. The play instinct is deep-rooted in animal nature. It is an inseparable part of our human nature. All young animals play. Little children do nothing else. Now Jesus says, "Unless you become as a little child you cannot enter the kingdom of God." Unless you know how to play, then you are out of place in God's universe. That would indicate to my mind that the Head of that universe takes delight in playing. One of the interesting chapters of our modern civilization deals with the attention which is being paid to the play-instinct. We are coming to see that children not only may play, but must play. If they do not play they become physically stunted, morally paralyzed. Playgrounds are just as essential to a great city as our churches and schools.

I, for one, believe that God loves play, and that He plays Himself. I think that some of His playthings are mists. You have all seen children playing with blocks. They take delight in building them in different forms: they build a pagoda, and when it is built they tear it down in order to build a castle. When a castle is built they throw it over in order to build a cottage. When the cottage is built they demolish it in order to make room for a railroad-station. The pleasure lies in building one thing after another. That is the way God acts with the mists. I have often watched Him on summer mornings. He never grows weary of making new things out of the mists. One minute He is making a lake, five minutes later He is making a river, five minutes later He is making a mountain, a

little later He is making a bank of snow, a little later He has made a great city with domes and towers and minarets. I know He enjoys it for it is something He has been doing since the Creation.

God also makes use of mists as decorations. He adorns the old, prosaic earth and makes it look poetic and mystical. There are artists who claim that London is never so beautiful as it is when it is buried in mist. The mist tones down the discords of clashing colours, it transfigures the bleakness of the prosaic. A city loses much of its sordidness if you can only half-cover it with mist. The dullest and most uninteresting city becomes dreamy and fascinating when you clothe it in robes of vapour. San Francisco is one of the most picturesque of American cities. Its picturesqueness lies in the fact that it is built largely on hills. The mists love hills, and that city is never so beautiful as when God has dressed it in mist. Somebody has said that the city looks like a Franciscan friar with his robe of gray, another, that it looks like a beautiful girl clothed in a garb of drab. The hillsides never look so charming as when the mists lie on them, and the houses on the tops of the hills never look so much like palaces, as when they are half-hidden in the fog.

I presume it would be correct to say that Nature is a daughter of God. At any rate, we always assume she is a woman. Nobody, when referring to Nature, ever uses the pronoun "he"; and the reason we assume Nature to be a woman is undoubtedly due to the fact that she is so beautiful. Now if we wish to speak of mists in terms of a woman's wardrobe, then we may say that mists are veils. A haze is a thin veil, whereas a fog is a thick one. Nature changes

the thickness of her veil, from time to time, in order to escape monotony. To change the figure we may say that a mist is a shirt-waist which Nature puts on, on summer mornings, in order to enhance her loveliness. Sometimes the shirt-waist is opaque, sometimes it is exceedingly thin. It would seem that the Almighty takes delight in changing the aspect of Nature in order that we may never get tired of her. We do not want a woman to look for evermore the same. The human heart loves variety, and we insist that a woman shall look different at different times. God does not permit Nature to be for evermore the same. He changes her appearance by robing her with different varieties of mists. She is a sort of Cleopatra in the powers of her fascination, and we can say of her, what Shakespeare said of the Queen of Egypt:

> *"Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale*
> *Her infinite variety."*

Did you ever think of the strength of the mist? When we think of power, we naturally think of the wind, or the water, or of chemical explosives, but there is not one of them that has greater power than the mist. The mist can go into the biggest city of the world and turn all the lights down. What other power under heaven can do that? London has a Lord Mayor and a Court of Aldermen. They are supposed to have control over the city, but a mist can come in and turn down the lights in all the public buildings, and in every private home of the world's metropolis. It is an interesting fact that mist has a peculiar antipathy to electric lights. A gas-jet will throw a beam farther into the mist than will an arc-lamp. It would seem as though the mist had a malicious pleasure in

saying: "I do not care anything for your new-fangled light, I will put it out." And so lighthouses are of little value in a mist. Almost every year some mighty steamer goes to wreck right under the eyes of a lighthouse. There is something in a mist that defies the piercing power of electricity.

We have heard a great deal within the last quarter of a century about the tremendous power of commerce. Panegyrics innumerable have been sounded in regard to its ever-extending dominion. New York City is the greatest commercial city in the New World, but we are absolutely helpless in the hands of a mist. Every now and then you awaken in the morning to the sound of the sirens and whistles and fog-horns of the Hudson River. Every vessel on the river is shouting at the top of its voice: "We are all in confusion out here. The mist has taken us by the throat and will not let us go." What other power is there in the world that will retard all the traffic in the Hudson and throw it into confusion? But the East River is equally helpless. The Fall River boats are mighty vessels. They have little fear of a storm. But when a heavy mist settles down on the East River then the Fall River boats lie tied up at their piers. They dare not try to make their way through Hell Gate in a mist. Even our harbour becomes dangerous. When a fog comes in, great ocean liners remain below quarantine afraid to venture to their docks. Great steamships lying at their docks eager to start out for Europe, are afraid to venture out until the mist announces that they may go. That is an amazing spectacle—the traffic of the metropolis of the New World under the dictation of a mist. We would not allow Germany to dictate to us when our ships should come in, or when

they could go out again, and yet we bow in meek submission to the autocracy of the mist. A mist is one of God's traffic squad, and when it holds up its finger all the great ships stop on their courses, and when the mist gives another signal the great ships proceed on their way.

A traveller soon comes to put a new emphasis upon the authority of a mist. Some of the keenest disappointments that a traveller knows are due to the interference of the mist. Some of you have gone to the top of Mount Washington to secure a lovely view, but there was no view because of the mist. Some of you have gone to the top of Mount Pilatus. You had read for years about that famous view. Your fellow-travellers had told you much about it, but when you arrived at Lucerne, you discovered that it was impossible to see anything from the top of the famous mountain. I travelled all the way to Alaska, once, to see the famous Muir glacier, but when I got there a mist put its broad hand over the face of the glacier saying—"Not to-day!" A mist speaks as one having authority, and not like the wind or the waves.

One of the greatest dangers of ocean-travel is the mist. You waken some morning, to hear the steam-whistle blowing. On looking out, you discover there is a mist. The ship is not afraid of a storm. The modern ship rather likes a storm. As soon as she sees a storm she stiffens herself and almost leaps forward to meet it. But as soon as a ship sees a fog the ship is frightened. Up to this time she has been an ocean greyhound, now she degenerates into a tortoise before the fog. She had held her head high, but now she goes down on her knees. A mist is the terror of the sea because there is no telling when it

may have an iceberg wrapped up in its gossamer folds. Why do you suppose the heart is so disquieted by that regular blowing of the ship's whistle at an interval of a few seconds? The ship is saying: "I am afraid. I am afraid! I am afraid!" and the fear communicates itself to the soul. Birds do not fly in a fog, nor do birds sing in a fog, nor do birds issue a call in a fog. The fog makes them afraid. Here, then, is a remarkable fact, that one of the servants of God with fingers that are spectral—not even skeleton fingers because skeleton fingers are solid, but with nothing but phantom fingers—can take the world by the throat, and hold it fast.

In some respects, we might say that the mist is an enemy of the human race. There are many acts of destruction which it commits upon the land. When a great fog lies for weeks upon London it lowers the vitality of the whole city. It snuffs out human lives by the thousand. If you have ever looked at the vital statistics of London through the years of great fogs, you have noted how the death rate has leaped forward during the period when the fog was densest. A fog of two or three months in London is like a great battle—when the fog has lifted you find a great field that is strewn with the wounded and the dying and the dead. Not only is a fog destructive of life, but it is also destructive of money. It is said that London spends twenty-five million dollars a year in extra gas-bills which are the direct result of fogs.

It is needless to dwell upon the colossal losses occasioned by fog on the sea. Nor is it necessary, at this time, to call attention to the long continued and heroic efforts which have been put forth to conquer the mist.

When Hawker and Grieve achieved the phenomenal feat of flying across the Atlantic, the papers were careful to inform us about the behaviour of the mist. Hawker said that in ten minutes his airship got into a fog, and that after they once rose above it they hardly saw the ocean again. Grieve said that only for a few seconds was it possible for them to see the ocean through a hole in the fog. When at last they came down they found themselves two hundred miles out of their course, all because the mist would not allow them to see. That, then, is an interesting fact that in the twentieth century when men are attempting to do a marvellously heroic thing, this old servant of God, the mist, comes out and throwing itself on the track, says: "You cannot succeed unless you first conquer me." The whole world has thus been brought face to face with the almightiness and the tremendous importance of mists. They have threatened to block the progress of the world.

The mist is an enemy to be conquered. It is going to be conquered in the air by the aviator soaring above it. When the great trans-Atlantic routes are laid down along which the airships are to travel, we shall find that these routes are all established above the level of the mist. But when it comes to dealing with mists in great cities, the problem is not so easy. We have learned how to cart away the snow; in the future we must learn how to cart away the mist. Just how we are going to do it it is, as yet, impossible to say. Some experts say that we are going to do it by the creation of currents of air. The air will take the mist on its back, and run off with it. Others think that the miracle is going to be wrought by the electrification of the air. The mist, as you

know, is due to the presence in the air of an infinite number of dust-particles. It is upon these dust-particles that the water-vapour condenses. Bits of soot and smoke act as nuclei. If, in some way or other, you could get rid of the solid particles of the air, then you would get rid of the mist. It is claimed that it will be possible, some day, for us to generate mighty electrical currents causing a precipitation of the dust in the air. This suggestion opens the way for a vast deal of dreaming. It may be, that in the future, we are going to have engineers of the air.

For the last hundred years we have been building our railroads, dealing with the mountains and the rivers and the chasms; in the hundred years that lie ahead of us we are going to grapple with the rivers and mountains and chasms in the air. Just as our locomotives on the trains in the West have mighty snow-ploughs attached to the cow-catchers, enabling them to make their way through the snow-drifts that Winter piles on the track, just so it may be that ships of the future are going to be supplied with fog-apparatus, so that each ship may be able to tunnel its way unharmed through the fog. No matter how the obstacles shall be overcome, there is no doubt of the ultimate victory. The Hebrew poet made no mistake when he said: "Thou hast made him [man] a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet."

My sermon was suggested by the present condition of the world. We are at present in the midst of a fog. It is the densest fog that has ever wrapped this earth. There is a darkness that can be felt, and all

the lights are impotent to pierce it. It is a remarkable fact that there is not upon the earth to-day a piece of apparatus that will enable us to penetrate the gloom. We have many different kinds of lights, but no light has as yet been invented that will enable us to see more than a few feet ahead of us. We talk about our great lights in the Church, in the university, in business, but none of these great lights are able to tell us what is going to happen five years from now, or two years, or one year, or six months, or even three months from now. That is certainly an amazing thing that there is not a man upon the earth who is able to see one month ahead of us. The lights have all failed us, and this is the day for bell-buoys and fog-horns sounding warnings. We hear voices saying: "Here is a reef," and "There is a reef," "Do not come here," "Do not go there." But as for the reefs that lie ahead of us, these are hidden in a mist that is impenetrable.

What then is our consolation? Here is one: fogs are shallow. All fogs are shallow. The foggiest of the London fogs are very broad and long, and nearly always shallow. A man going up into the Observatory at Greenwich, and looking out across London can see the tops of the buildings in the city bathed in sunlight. Sometimes the fog is so thick that one cannot see across the deck of a ship in the Thames, while at the same time the topmasts are wrapped round with sunbeams. Let us remember then that the fog, to-day, is shallow; it does not extend all the way to the stars. Above the fog is the wide-open eye of the Eternal. He sees us all. He knows what He is doing.

In the second place, fogs are transient; they come and go. The longest-lived fog extends only for a

little while. The mists of the summer morning are exceedingly evanescent. I have seen a mist walking with the sun across the meadows, up a hill, but when near the top of the hill I have seen the mist vanish in the twinkling of an eye. It made me think of Enoch. He walked with God, and then was not, because God took him. The mist and the sun walked together, and then the mist was not because the sun took it. The transitoriness of mists has always made an impression on the human imagination. A New Testament writer compares our human life to the mist. "What is your life?" asks James. "You are but a vapour that appears for a little time, and then vanishes away." James Moffat, one of the greatest living New Testament scholars, translates this passage thus: "What is your life? You are but a mist." The fog is dense to-day, but it will not be on us always. By and by, we shall be out under the sun again.

The third consolation is that fogs are the servants of the Almighty. The Hebrew poet was right when he said: "Fire and hail, snow and vapour, stormy wind fulfilling his word." A book could be written filled with the story of how God in human history has compelled the mists to serve Him. In the tenth chapter of *Exodus*, we are told how, at a certain crisis in Egyptian history, a darkness thick enough to be felt settled down upon the land, lasting for three long days. Scientists tell us that that darkness was due to mist. By means of the mist the King of heaven endeavoured to bend the will of the Egyptian monarch. All of the American historians in describing the battle of Long Island, tell us how after that disastrous American defeat the outlook for the colonists was exceedingly dark. There seemed to be no escape for the retiring

fugitives. The British sentinels were placed up and down the shore. But God, in His mercy, flung upon the East River one of the thickest of His mists, and in that mist twelve hundred American soldiers made their way across the river under the very noses of the sentinels of the British fleet.

But we need not go back to history to find ways in which God makes use of mists. Every Spring and every Autumn He uses mists to keep off the frost. When water-vapour condenses it gives off vast measures of latent heat, and this latent heat poured into the air saves the buds and fruits. Why should we doubt that God will use this present world-fog for the advancement of His glory? If you should ask me the cause of the fog that to-day covers the world, I should say that it is caused by the meeting of two currents of intellectual air: one from the sordid, selfish past, and the other from the idealistic Christian future. The two currents meet, and there is a vast amount of dust in the air thrown there by the vast upheaval of the Great War. And now, in this mist, God is striving to bend our will to His. Who knows but that in this darkness we may escape from many of the tyrants that have held us fast? Who knows but what this mist is keeping the world warm, hastening the budding of a million flowers of Paradise? The old experiences recounted in *Genesis* may be repeated. The first mist spoken of turned out to be the medium of God's blessing. Let me read you the sentence as it stands: "There went up a mist from the earth, and it watered the whole face of the ground." When the whole face of the ground had been watered, then the earth was ready for a new manifestation of the power of God. There is a mist now going up from the

earth, and it will water the whole face of the ground, and after this preparation who knows what new and beautiful thing the Almighty will do?

X

SPRING

I WANT to think with you in this sermon about Spring. I have chosen this topic because everybody for the last three months has been talking about Spring. They have been talking about her in the South and also in New England, and also as far west as Ohio. The whole nation, so far as I know, has made Spring the subject of its daily conversation. People have been talking about Spring, not because she is beautiful or wonderful, but because she is so late. We expected the Spring to arrive at a certain date, and when she did not come we were disappointed. We looked at the clock and saw that Spring was due, but when we looked out of the window and saw that Spring had not arrived, we were more or less provoked. We had the disposition of a school-teacher; we treated Spring as though she were our pupil, and we were nettled because the pupil was tardy. We do not like Spring when she is dilatory. Moreover, when Spring comes late, it upsets our plans. We had made up our mind about when the furnace-fire should go out. Spring did not come and so we had to keep the furnace-fire in. The gardener got out his implements ready to go to work, waiting for Spring to give a signal, and when Spring gave no signal the gardener had to go in and sit down by the fire again. The farmer got out his plough and wanted to go to work. He waited for Spring to blow her whistle, but the whistle did not blow, and all the farm oper-

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ations were retarded. Nobody likes Spring to be late.

Moreover, Spring has been so peculiar. She did not seem to have arrived at all—she came with snowflakes in her hair. We have our ideal as to what Spring ought to be, and when she does not measure up to our expectations, we feel that we have been mistreated. We carry in our mind the pattern of what Spring ought to be, and when she arrives, cut after a different pattern, we fall into a faultfinding mood. We are very free in our criticisms, and we do not hesitate to condemn the seasons. But Spring is here, full-orbed and full-toned, and so we say to her, "All hail!"

I ask you to think about the coming of Spring. We have been talking about it, but, possibly, we have not thought about it. It is remarkably easy to talk about things without thinking about them. A great deal of our talk has very little thought in it. It is possible to look at a thing without seeing it. We have looked at Spring; I wonder how many of us have seen her? We never see anything unless we put the mind behind the eye. When we put the mind behind the eye, the mind gives the eye a push toward an object, then we see that object. And so I ask you to put your mind behind your eye, and give it a strong push in the direction of Spring. Let us all make an honest effort to see Spring.

What a mystery it is that we have any Spring at all. We are surprised that Spring was late. What a surprise we should have had if Spring had stayed away indefinitely! There are many human beings who have never seen Spring. There are men and women in the Arctic and the Antarctic regions who

have never known what Spring is. They have had Winter all the time. They have had nothing but ice and snow every day, of every week, of every month, of every year. That is all they have known from babyhood. That is all they will ever know until they close their eyes in death. There are people in the Tropics who have never known anything but Summer—flowers and birds every day of the year from the first day of their life to the last. Think of a summer extending through a million years, fragrant, beautiful, musical all the time! There are other human beings who enjoy two seasons, Winter and Summer!

But we fortunate mortals who live in the temperate zone are permitted to make use of four seasons. We are millionaires when it comes to seasons. We have all the wealth there is. No human beings, anywhere upon this planet, have more seasons than you and I enjoy. Indeed, it is difficult to know how we could use more than we have—four. Our mind is so constructed that it does not easily think of what a fifth season would be like. For instance: if the fifth season should arrive, what should we call it? What excitement there would be when all the magazines offered five-hundred-dollar prizes for the best name to give to the new arrival! The name of a new season would be far more interesting and exciting than naming a new baby. And after we had named the new season, what would we do with it? We have already all the seasons that it is possible for us to use. If God should thrust a fifth season on us it would only be an element of confusion. It would necessitate a reconstruction of our dressmaking establishments, and upset the whole world in innumerable ways. But there

is no likelihood that God will add to the number of the seasons. The number is complete, and that number is four.

There are just as many seasons as there are Gospels in the New Testament. It is hard to see what we should do if there were five. We could not possibly dispense with one of the four. If a reporter should steal two of them away we would protest; if some one should take three of them we should cry out in pain. We would all feel like paupers if we had but a single Gospel. Because we are in possession of all four, our joy is complete. Why should we not think of the seasons as so many gospels? Why should we not say, sometimes, to ourselves—" the good tidings according to Summer!" " the good news of Christ according to Autumn!" " the good news of the heavenly Father according to Winter?" The four seasons are so many evangelists and all of them convey a message from the heart of God.

The Spring is a miracle. When you go to the dictionary in search of a definition of a miracle you are told that it is an event which cannot be accounted for by the known forces of Nature. Well, Spring is an event which cannot be accounted for by any of the known forces of Nature. When I was a school-teacher years ago, I used to take great delight in telling the boys and girls in the High School just how it happened that we have four different seasons. I told them that it was due to the varying of the inclination of the earth's axis of rotation to the plane of the ecliptic. I took great satisfaction in giving my pupils this information for I felt sure it would explain to them quite fully the cause of Spring. Yet, after all, what does that learned jargon say to you? Does that

explain the glory of Spring? The scientists declare that Spring is due to the angle at which the rays of the sun strike the earth. When the sunbeams strike the earth quite obliquely we have Winter; when the sunbeams strike the earth quite vertically we have Summer; when the sunbeams strike the earth somewhere between the angle of the sunbeams in Winter and the angle of the sunbeams in Summer, then we have Autumn or Spring.

But you cannot account for the Spring by measuring the angle at which the sunbeams strike the earth. The sunbeams fall upon the earth at a certain angle and the earth suddenly grows green. Why should it grow green? How do you account for that? You say it is because the angle is what it is. Well, let the angle be what it was, and let the same sunbeams fall upon a tree, and the tree grows white, let them fall upon another tree and that tree grows pink, and let them fall upon another tree and that tree grows red. What a miracle that is! Let the same rays fall, at the same angle, upon a bush and the bush grows beautiful, but has no fragrance. Let the same rays fall upon another bush and the bush has beauty and perfume also. What a mystery that is! Now let the same sunbeams fall upon the back of a bird, and the bird sings. What a miracle that is! Will you allow me to suggest a definition of the Spring: It is a vast complex of tiny grass-blades, blossoms, fragrances, bird-notes all caught and held in a mesh of sunbeams. Only God Almighty can create beautiful things like that. It may be that some one who reads these lines has been in the habit of turning up his nose at the miracles recorded in the New Testament. If you find those miracles incredible then close the new

Bible and look at the miracles recorded in the old Bible. There is no miracle recorded in the New Testament half so amazing, so inexplicable, so wonderful as the miracle of Spring!

Spring is a miracle of beauty. She is associated in all our minds with the beautiful. The poets have been singing about Spring for a thousand years. Indeed there is a peculiar style of poetry which is known everywhere as Spring poetry. To be sure, all the seasons of the year are beautiful, but Spring has a beauty which is unique. She has a different beauty from that of Autumn, or Summer. There is a delicacy of tint and a subtlety of shadow and a freshness of loveliness in Spring which we find in no other season of the year. There is a certain sparkle and jubilancy and rush of life in Spring which the other seasons do not know. Where does all this beauty come from? It comes from God, and therefore God must be an artist. God is a lover of the beautiful and the creator of it. Do you ever think of God as an artist? Do you ever pray to Him as to an artist? One of the reasons why we do not love Him more is because we have such narrow notions of Him.

John Fiske in his little volume entitled *The Idea of God* tells us about his idea of the Almighty when he was a boy five years old. God, he thought, lived in a narrow office in which there was a standing desk. On the desk there were a number of ledgers bound in coarse leather. God was tall and slender and He wore spectacles. There was a pen over one of His ears. He also held a pen in His fingers. By His side there stood an attendant angel who also was busy writing. The walls of the office were rather low so that God and the angel could look over these walls

and take note of what all men and women and boys and girls were doing. Everything that was done was entered in one of these ledgers, and little John Fiske knew that God was writing down things about him which would face him at the Judgment Day. I fear there are many people well advanced in years who have never got very far beyond that conception of the Almighty. There are multitudes who retain the conception held by Michael Angelo, that God is a mighty Judge, seated on a throne hurling thunderbolts at rebellious sinners.

Of course it is impossible for one to speak with gladness to the God of John Fiske's imagination, or to the God of the great Italian painter. Why not think of God, now and then, as a poet? Mrs. Browning was right when she said: "God Himself is the great poet, and the real is His song." We have no difficulty in believing that God teaches the birds to sing; why should it be difficult for us to believe that it is God who teaches poets to sing? Tennyson says in *In Memoriam:*

> *"I do but sing because I must,*
> *And pipe but as the linnets sing."*

Alexander Pope says: "I lisp'd in numbers, for the numbers came." There would be no poetry on the earth if there were no poetry in the heart of the Eternal. Corot painted his landscapes because God is a painter, and Turner painted his sunsets because God, from the beginning of the world, had painted sunsets. God is the Great Musician, the universe is an organ with ten thousand keys, and God brings music from every key. God, too, is an architect. What is Spring but an enchanted palace on whose walls are hung

lovely pictures and through whose corridors there flow delicious odours? It is a palace that goes up without the sound of a hammer. It is a palace which only the Infinite can build. It is the Palace Beautiful. It is an interesting fact that John, on Patmos, when he wished to symbolize humanity perfected, transfigured by the indwelling glory of God, made use of a girl dressed for her wedding. It is also interesting that Botticelli, when he wished to symbolize Spring, made use of a girl with blossoms round her neck and in her hair. The whole world agrees that Spring is beautiful.

Spring is likewise a miracle of power. In none of the battles of the Great War were such tremendous forces exhibited as are exhibited in the Spring. The earth dies every winter. For months it lies stiff and cold. When it is in this condition it is impossible to bring it back to life again. We are wonderful beings and we are capable of making use of tremendous forces. We can manufacture different kinds of flame, but it is not possible for us to kindle fires enough to create Spring in December. Every winter the Hudson River valley lies in a great sarcophagus—absolutely dead. There is not heat enough in all the furnaces of the world to bring the Hudson River valley back to life until One higher up speaks the word. When Lazarus lay within the tomb he made no response to the weeping of his sister Martha, nor did he pay attention to Mary's piteous appeal. It was only when an Omnipotent Voice cried: "Come forth!" that the dead man rose again.

In Winter this earth of ours dies, and for a long time it lies motionless and silent, and then One who is invisible says: "Come forth!" and the dead earth

rises in glory. There are people who are sorely troubled by the story of the Resurrection, as recorded in the New Testament. I hardly see why any one should be troubled by a story such as that. It is indeed wonderful, but it is not a whit more wonderful than the rising of the earth in Spring. Spring is the angel of the Resurrection. When Spring blows her trumpet the dead earth stands upon its feet and sings.

I recently attended the funeral service of a dear friend of mine. The day was almost ideal. The windows were open and the air was fragrant. In the chapel and out of it there were flowers. I found myself in the midst of a flower-garden, and it was easy to say: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" Who could doubt the fact of the Resurrection in the month of May!

Spring is a revelation of God's love. It reminds us of the breadth of His generosity. Jesus, one day, in a discourse to Galilæan peasants asked them to note how the sunbeams fell upon the evil and the good, and how the rain descended upon the just and the unjust. These phenomena of the natural world symbolize the breadth of God's eternal mercy. Spring is constantly reminding us that God is no respecter of persons and that He has a generous heart. He pours out the beauty of Spring without stint upon us, and He pours it out upon every one. When you ride along the roads in Spring you pass mansions of the rich, and you also pass little cottages of humble farmers, and you notice that into the front yard of the humblest cottage, Spring has found its way. This beautiful servant of the Most High visits the rich and the poor alike. There is no one so poor or so humble that he cannot enjoy the fragrance of Spring.

Spring also symbolizes God's unchanging love. The pictures which God paints do not fade. Leonardo da Vinci's *Last Supper* is a wreck, and so, also, is his celebrated *Mona Lisa.* The most exquisite things which Leonardo da Vinci painted into that face have been scrubbed out by the hands of chemicals. Rembrandt's *Night Watch* is a wreck, and so, also, is Titian's famous *Assumption.* So, also, is Correggio's *Holy Night.* The masterpieces of the great masters all are faded. Titian's reds are becoming dark, and his yellows are becoming white. Even Turner's skies are becoming lemon-yellow and chalky-white. Munkacsy, who painted only yesterday, has left pictures which are already growing rapidly black. God is the only Master whose masterpieces are fadeless. The colours of Spring in this year of grace are as fresh and beautiful as were the colours in the first Spring that ever greeted the eye, and down through all the ages we are sure of this—that Spring will be no less beautiful than what it has been from the beginning. From everlasting to everlasting, God is God. He is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

I must not close this sermon without reminding you of Decoration Day, a day on which we think of our heroic dead. It is fitting that Memorial Day should be a day in Spring, and it is also fortunate that it should be a Spring day located close up to the door of Summer. Decoration Day has on it the freshness and the bloom of Spring. It stands at the threshold of Summer amid the blossoms and the bird-notes and the fragrances of Spring at her climax. It is easier to say of the dead now than at any other season of the year: "They are not here, they are risen!"

XI

ODOURS

THROUGH this series of sermons I have conducted you, chiefly, through the realm of the eye. Objects of sight are comparatively easy to deal with. We love the things that we see. In one instance I made a new departure and carried you into the domain of the ear. My subject then was "Sounds." In my last sermon I combined the two, taking "Spring" for my subject, which is a complex of sights and sounds. Here, I make a radical departure, and ask you to follow me into the kingdom of the Nose. My subject is "Odours."

I count this the most difficult of all the subjects with which I have, thus far, attempted to deal. There is no doubt that the sense of smell is a disparaged sense. Everybody would agree in saying that it stands at the bottom of the list. The sense of sight stands first. People are always saying: "What an awful thing it is to be blind! How I should hate to lose my sight!" Next to the eye stands the ear. "Isn't it terrible to be deaf?" is a question which is often propounded. Next to that, probably, comes the sense of touch; although some, no doubt, would put the sense of touch at the top. What would life be if our sense of touch were destroyed? And then comes the sense of taste, and, last of all, at the end of the procession, comes the sense of smell. If some one should say: "It is necessary for you to give up at least one of your senses, which one shall it be?" there is no doubt you would swiftly answer—"Let it be the sense of smell."

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It is difficult to say interesting things about the nose. The nose does not lend itself easily to romance. There is nothing poetic about it. You can work the eye into poetry and also the ear, even the hands and the feet, but it is difficult to make anything either romantic or poetic out of the nose. Educators have never paid much attention to the sense of smell. All of our other senses are assiduously cultivated in the schools. Within the last twenty-five years many persons have emphasized the importance of cultivating the hand. It is claimed that the brain cannot be fully developed unless the hand is cultivated. It is by doing things with our hand that we learn to think straight with our mind. We have heard endless talk about the importance of the cultivation of the eye. The art of observation is highly extolled. Boys and girls are urged to cultivate the powers of observation, and a deal has been said in regard to the importance of cultivating the sense of hearing. It is counted tremendously important that boys and girls should learn to discriminate notes and appreciate the highest forms of music. It is somewhat remarkable that hardly anything has been said in regard to the importance of cultivating the sense of smell. The eye and the ear are highly prized, and the cultivation of them is constantly insisted on, but the power of discriminating odours, or analyzing a mixture of perfumes, that is not to be found among the list of educational fads. Educational reformers have looked in every other direction for new fields to conquer, except in the direction of the nose.

In society hardly anything is said about the sense of smell. In Japan they have a game in which a person brings into the room perhaps twenty kinds of incense

on a tray. These forms of incense are mingled, two and three at a time, and each member of the company is asked to guess which kinds of perfume have been mingled. The person who guesses right, the largest number of times, is the person who wins the game. No such game as that is heard of in all America. We do not find pleasure in cultivating the power of the nose. I have read, somewhere, of a person who attempted to give a concert of perfumes, but it was universally conceded that the concert was not a success. It is impossible for us to do anything with odours in society. Even the scientists have not done as much with the sense of smell as they have done with the sense of sight and hearing. Some years ago when the *Encyclopædia Britannica* came out, somebody counted the number of pages devoted to sound, and found twenty-two. The attention given to sight covered sixteen pages, whereas all that was said about the sense of smell covered only a page and a half. Physicists, physiologists and psychologists have done a deal of work in this kingdom, but, as yet, they are only children playing on the shore, picking up a pebble now and then, while the great ocean of truth lies all undiscovered before them.

We have banished the nose from public worship. This is quite interesting when one bears in mind that, in all the pagan religions of antiquity, the nose was given a prominent place. The Egyptians were especially fond of fragrance, and all their religious ceremony was carried on in an air freighted with incense. Moses was instructed in all the science of the Egyptians. And that is no doubt the reason why incense was given a place in the Jewish Church. In *Exodus* and *Leviticus* we read again and again of

how incense is to be burned. The sense of smell was given its proper place in the worship of Jehovah. In the second century an effort was made to introduce incense into Christian worship, but there were many objectors and the progress was slow, but at last those who favoured incense were victorious, and in the third century A. D., the use of incense became an established feature of Christian worship. In both the Greek and the Roman Churches, down to the present hour, the sense of smell is made use of in the ritual.

In the sixteenth century the Reformers drove out incense, with many other things, and for the last four hundred years we have had no incense in our Protestant churches. It is interesting that for some reason or other we are willing to use only the ear. We all acknowledge the utility of music, we feel that music is an indispensable part of a completed worship. But as for the eye we are not interested in it. We have gone a short distance in the direction of the eye, but the distance is short indeed. In some of our churches we have beautiful stained-glass windows, but it is not until you come into the Roman Catholic Church that you find a feast that is spread for the eye. There you will find not only pictured windows, but you will find paintings and statues and gorgeous robes. And not only is a place given to the eye but also to the touch. The Roman Catholic makes use of the crucifix and the rosary and the holy water, and he makes use of the sense of taste in the Sacrament, and in order to increase his joy in worship he fills the air of his church with incense. The Roman Catholic summons all the five senses to take part in the worship of God. This is one of the explanations of the wonderful grip which the Roman

Catholic Church has upon so many millions of human beings. She maintains this grip on the mind because she makes such free use of the bodily senses.

People who live in cities are especially prone to disparage the sense of smell. In the city the word "smell" comes to mean a "disagreeable smell." We do not ordinarily speak of odours in a city unless they are disagreeable and we wish to express our displeasure. It is in the city that we smell garbage cans and gasometers and, now and then, get a stench out of the open mouth of a sewer. We feel, sometimes, that it would be far better if we had no nose at all. Happiness would be increased if we could dispense with the sense of smelling.

And so from many reasons throughout the civilized world, the sense of smell has become a neglected sense. The inventors have passed it by. They have made spectacles for the eyes, microscopes and telescopes, but they have not made any instrument to assist the nose. They have done their best to help the ear, they have created the stethoscope, and I know not how many other instruments. During the World War they devised an apparatus by means of which it was possible to hear the movement of the propeller of a U boat at the bottom of the sea. The inventor has manufactured artificial ear-drums, and has supplied us with ear-trumpets and acousticons, but nothing has yet been created to heighten the sense of smell. We put infinitesimal particles of matter on a glass slide and magnify the size of them for the eye, but there is no instrument yet devised which can magnify the potency of an odour.

The neglect of the sense of smell is recorded even in our language. When a person cannot see we have

an adjective ready made to express it—"He is blind!" we say. When a person cannot hear, we say at once —"He is deaf!" But if a person cannot smell there is no adjective with which to describe him. We have never thought it worth while to coin one.

The result of all this is, that the sense of smell is a decadent sense. Somebody has called it a fallen angel. It does not stand so high as it stood thousands of years ago. What its future is going to be it would be hazardous to conjecture. We know that the savage is far superior to the civilized man in the development of the sense of smell. Savages can hunt game by means of their nose. Peruvian Indians are said to be able to distinguish a foe in the dark, and tell from what tribe the foe has come from his own particular odour. But the savages are inferior to the animals when it comes to the sense of smell. What a wonderful creature a dog is in the realm of odours! We call him an inferior animal, and he must smile at us, and think us conceited. While he lies at our feet he is taking in bits of information from the surrounding universe of which we have no knowledge. We sometimes think he is asleep because his eyes are closed, but he is not asleep. If you will notice his nose you will discover he is intensely awake. He is receiving wireless messages from all directions, and the receiving station of the messages is his nose. A dog can pick up a scent from the ground and follow it for miles through the woods. There are probably a thousand odours near the ground, but the dog can pick up the scent which he wants. It may be that of a fox, or a rabbit, or the boots of his master, and he can follow it for miles until at last it brings him out to the place where he wants to be.

But even the animals, wonderful as they are, are inferior to the insects in their power of smell. Ants are said to be deaf, but their power of smell is phenomenally acute. Bees use their eyes, but it is their sense of smell which is the guide of their conduct. Insects do not care for the colour of the flowers. Insects live in a universe of odours. Is it not strange that there should be millions of creatures for whom the universe is not, as for us, a mass either of colour or of sound, but a vast mass of odours? It is said that the moth can detect the presence of another moth within the radius of a mile.

In the history of the race it is interesting to note how within the last three thousand years the sense of smell has deteriorated. Among the peoples of antiquity the most cultivated were the Greeks. No other race rose higher than they. There are scholars, today, who declare that the Greeks were as much superior to us as we are superior to a low grade of barbarians. They were the leaders in philosophy and science and art, and it was one of their characteristics that they cultivated the sense of smell. They were lovers of perfume. They kept their clothing in scented chests. While they were eating at their banquets the air was filled with the odour of fragrant woods. Often the fountains played with perfumed waters. You will remember how in *The Iliad* the gods in Olympus were delighted with the odour that came up from the burning oxen, and you will not forget how in *The Æneid* Venus, as she walked, exhaled a delicious fragrance. Even the gods and the goddesses of the pagan world were fragrant.

After the Greeks came the Arabs. They were leaders in science and philosophy and art, and they

also developed the sense of smell to an astonishing degree. It is said that an Arab can detect smoke at a distance of forty miles. All through the Middle Ages there was a great commerce in spices and gums and fragrant woods. In the Renaissance both men and women carried receptacles about with them which contained perfume. At the end of the eighteenth century Napoleon Bonaparte every morning poured cologne water over his shoulders and hands. There is a vast use of perfume even to-day, but to many persons it has become disagreeable. If we have it at all it must be exceedingly faint, and moreover it oftentimes awakens suspicion, for, not infrequently, a beautiful odour is only an embroidered veil thrown over the face of a dirty smell. But no matter how far this angel may have fallen, it is safe to say that it will not fall completely out of existence.

Let us think about it for a little while, and follow out some of the questions which it naturally suggests. Let us begin with the undeniable fact that the sense of smell is a gift of God. God created man in His own image, and when He created man He gave him the sense of smell. When He made the brain He made the olfactory lobes. When He was fashioning that organ of thought He set aside a certain section of it for the discrimination and enjoyment of odours. This is the Lord's doing and it ought to be wonderful in our eyes. The same God who made the solar system made also the nervous system, and one is fully as wonderful as the other. In the nervous system there are nerves known as the olfactory nerves, nerves whose special business it is to carry to the brain those sensations which are produced by odours. When Job looked at the heavens and the earth he exclaimed:

"These are parts of his ways." And so you and I when we look at the structure of the brain and the arrangement of the nervous system can say when we look at the olfactory lobes and the olfactory nerves—these are a part of His ways.

Why did the Lord God Almighty create the olfactory lobes and the olfactory nerves? It was because He had decided in the counsels of eternity that the universe should be a scented universe. In His wisdom He had planned a perfumed cosmos, in His goodness He had decreed that all created things should be fragrant. When, therefore, you stand face to face with odours, you are standing face to face with one of the works of the Most High. When God made the human temple He decided there should be five gates: the eye-gate, the ear-gate, the touch-gate, the taste-gate, and the gate of smell; and through the last of the gates it was decreed there should be carried treasures not to be carried through any other gate for the pleasure and delight of the soul.

The sense of smell is an amazing gift of God. What a mysterious gift it is! It is just as wonderful as the gift of sight. If it does not seem so wonderful it is because we have not thought of it enough. Everything becomes the more wonderful the longer you think of it. We are all the time praising the eye. We say it is a delicate organ, and so it is, and yet it is not so delicate as the sense of smell. The eye is one of the toughest of our organs. It will work hour after hour, day after day through the years, hardly flinching, seldom fainting. But the sense of smell is so delicate that you can exhaust it in a few moments. Put a rose to your nostrils and the scent of it is exceedingly sweet. Bring the rose

near you again, the scent is sweet, but it is fainter. Bring it again and the scent is fainter still. Keep on bringing it, and very soon the rose has no odour at all. What has happened? The sense of smell has become exhausted. It is so fatigued that it is no longer able to carry impressions to the brain. That, you see, is a wonderful protection against odours that are disagreeable. When you see a man working in a sewer, you wonder how he can endure the odour. He endures it because he does not smell it. The sense of smell, at the very beginning, grew weary, and refused to tell the brain what the odour was.

We boast much about the wonderful power of the eye, the long distance through which it will travel, but the nose will travel immeasurably farther. In the Eastern Archipelago there are islands known as the Isles of Spices. Travellers on shipboard become conscious of the presence of the islands when as yet they lie below the curve of the sea. The eye cannot see them, but the sense of smell takes hold of them. They report themselves to the nose before they stand before the eye.

The sense of smell is one of the most independent of all our senses. The eye is dependent absolutely on light. Without the sun and the moon and stars it cannot do anything. The eye carries us successfully through all the hours of the day, but when night falls, if the clouds cover the moon and the stars, then we stumble and fall. But the nose does not weary. The nose goes heroically on; into the night it travels. The darkness and the light are both alike to it. The night shines round about it as the day.

The sense of smell is the finest-fingered of all our senses. We find it difficult sometimes to pick up a

needle from the floor, we are so awkward, our fingers are so clumsy. But think of what the sense of smell can do. It will pick up an atom of musk in the atmosphere—a particle of musk so small that scientists say it is no more than two one-millionths part of a milligram, so small that it is impossible for the eye to take hold of it. Only the sense of smell has fingers fine enough to pick up a thing like that. When you hold a rose before your face the eye can take hold of the colour and the form, but those are coarse-grained things compared with the odour of the rose. That is its essence, that is its spirit, its soul, its ethereal nature, and only the sense of smell can lay hold of that.

The sense of smell is the most intimate of all our senses. It is the sense of the imagination. It is the sense of memory. It is wonderful how odours will call back old associations. They have a magic way of striking the electric chain by which we are darkly bound. The sense of smell runs down into the very centre of the soul. There are odours that cause a headache, and there are odours which cause people to fall into a faint. There are odours which bring on a hemorrhage; occasionally an odour has caused death. A man has died, before now, under the blow of an odour.

Whenever we deal with Nature we are impressed by the infinite variety of whatever it is we are studying. The wonderful thing about the stars is there are so many of them, and the birds that they are so numerous, and the flowers that they are so countless. Whenever you go into the workshop of the Infinite you are amazed by the abundance of the treasures which you find there. I wonder how many odours there are? They are as innumerable as the sands of the sea-

shore. Some of us, in our ignorance, speak only of the odours of flowers. We do not grant even to all the flowers the gift of fragrance. We say there are odourous flowers and non-odourous flowers. But you ought to be careful when you say a thing like that in the presence of an insect. A flower is non-odourous to you because your nose is so stupid. There are no non-odourous flowers. Everything in the realm of the flowers is to the insect perfumed.

But fruits are no less odourous than flowers. It is not simply with the taste that we enjoy fruit, it is also with the nose. How delicious is the smell of an apple or of a peach. Next to the pleasure of eating a melon is the pleasure of smelling one. I often envy the men who spend their lives working with fruit. There is an incense constantly burning on the altar; they must feel always that they are in the home of the gods. But trees also are odourous. The roots have one odour and the bark another, the wood still another, the leaves still another, and the seeds another still. A tree might be defined as a complex of odours. A tree when it is cut down exhales a most wonderful perfume, and even when it is dead and sawed up into planks, the sawdust under your feet is fragrant. But to me there is nothing in the realm of odours more delicious than the smell of burning autumn leaves.

I love to ride through Westchester County in the afternoon of autumn days when the gardeners have gathered the leaves together and are burning them, here and there in piles. There is no sort of incense that I know anything about that is diviner than that.

Of all the shops in which men work there is no shop so attractive to me as a carpenter shop, and the feature that makes it supremely attractive is the smell

of the shavings. In the shavings I get the breath of the tree. When you walk through the woods if you are sensitively organized, there is a wonderful exhilaration in your soul, and the explanation of it is that you are being played upon by so many sights and sounds and odours. Nature is throwing you bouquets; some bouquets are for the eyes, others are for the ears, and still others are for the nose. There is an infinite number of delicate odours that you cannot distinguish one from the other, but which will give you a pleasure which you cannot describe. Odours from the flowers and odours from the mosses, and odours from the bark of trees and odours from the ground. A forest is a great aggregate of perfumes. No wonder that when one walks through the woods he feels that he is being cleansed and lifted into heavenly places.

One of the great attractions of a farm is its odours, and it is difficult to say which odour is the most pleasant, whether it be that of a meadow in the morning, or whether it be of the grass that has just been mown, or whether it be the breath of a cow. When we go to the seashore, one of the loveliest of its attractions is not the beauty of the water but the smell of the salt. Just one whiff of the sea acts as a tonic and makes the heart beat. All of the seasons are perfumed and each one has a perfume different from all the others. If you were blind you could tell the difference between Summer and Spring, and between Spring and Autumn, and between Autumn and Winter. If you had no eyes nor ears you could say as the seasons pass by: "This is Spring, this is Summer, this is Autumn, and this is Winter." Even Winter is odourous. One of the recent Russian novelists in de-

scribing his heroine says: "She came in to her lover's room after a walk through the crisp, wintry air and stood at the table, and while she stood there her jacket radiated the fresh sweet smell of the cold." One of the delightful features of Winter is the fresh, sweet smell of the cold.

I cannot close my list of delightful odours without speaking of one that is especially pleasant to me. It is not an odour of Nature, but an odour of an institution created by man—the odour of the library. I like the smell of books. On my first trip through Europe, I was alone and, sometimes, got very homesick. And in every one of the capitals that I visited I made a practice of going for a half-hour into a library and sitting down, not to read the books but to smell them. The odour carried me home, and I left the place renewed and comforted.

Whether an odour is disagreeable or not depends upon the person. How true it is that there is no arguing about taste! We like the thing that we like, and we dislike the thing which we dislike. To some there is no smell more disagreeable than the smell of tobacco, to others it is exceedingly sweet. Some will run away from it, and others would like the odour in their nostrils all the time. There are people who are sickened by the smell of apples, and others who dislike intensely the smell of roses. There are some who dislike the smell of a rocky shore at low tide and there are others who love it much. To some the exhalations of a dunghill are exceedingly disagreeable, and to others they are highly pleasant. God makes a variety of odours in order that each one may find those which give him the highest pleasure.

What a mystery this world of odours is! How

many questions one can ask which no one can answer! How, for instance, can Nature manufacture such subtle and beautiful perfumes as she does? Chemists can manufacture artificial perfumes, but they are poor, shabby imitations. They never come up to the perfumes which Nature makes. When you go into the laboratory of the chemist you are impressed by his vast and intricate apparatus. When you open his books you are dumbfounded by those long and mysterious formulas. Anybody can take a handful of soil and rain-drops and set up in his backyard a laboratory, and can have the sweetest of the perfumes which man knows. In the same little garden-plot will grow violets and pansies and verbenas and flox and mignonettes and primroses and hyacinths and roses, each one with its own distinct and peculiar fragrance, every fragrance perfect and unapproachable by anything created by man. How does the Supreme Chemist work His miracle? We ask the question and then stand dumb.

If you ask why this world of odour, and why this sense of smell? my answer is that odours must have been created for enhancing the pleasure of man. We do not have a nose for the purpose of finding food. We can find food without it; nor do we have a nose for the purpose of protecting ourselves against our foes, for in civilized society the nose is no protection against enemies. The sense of smell has been granted us for the purpose of increasing the scope and the volume of our joy. God wants us to be happy, and so He spreads the table for the eye and also for the ear, and also for the nose. He spreads the table before us. Our cup runneth over. He has given us all things richly to enjoy. When Jesus said: "I am come

that ye might have life, and have it more abundantly," He was voicing the deepest wish in the heart of God. It is God's desire for every one of us that we may have His joy, and that our joy may be full. Ralph Waldo Emerson in his little poem *Each and All* says that at one time in his life owing to the evanescent nature of beauty he came to the conclusion that beauty was something to be cast aside in order that the soul might devote itself exclusively to the contemplation of truth:

> *"Then I said, 'I covet Truth;*
> *Beauty is unripe childhood's cheat,—*
> *I leave it behind with the games of youth.'"*

But the universe at once began to enter its protest:

> *"As I spoke, beneath my feet*
> *The ground-pine curled its pretty wreath.*
> *Running over the club-moss burrs."*

Beauty bubbled up under the poet's feet:

> *"I inhaled the violet's breath;*
> *Around me stood the oaks and firs;*
> *Pine-cones and acorns lay on the ground."*

That was beauty of a different sort!

> *"Over me soared the eternal sky,*
> *Full of light and of Deity;"*

That was beauty different still.

> *"Again I saw, again I heard,*
> *The rolling river, the morning bird;—"*

That was beauty of still another variety: And then

> *"Beauty through my senses stole,*
> *I yielded myself to the perfect whole."*

XII

THE LANDSCAPE

MY subject in this sermon is "The Landscape." Let me begin with a definition. Of course, we all know what a landscape is when we see one. Possibly some of us have never made an effort to write a definition of one. What would you think of this as a definition? "A landscape is a piece of the earth's surface which the eye can carry," or, "A landscape is as much of the earth's surface as one can see at one time." In other words —"A landscape is an eyeful of the earth's surface." "An eyeful." Let us meditate on that. We sometimes speak of a handful, and we know just what that is. Our hand is a good-sized organ, and we can extend the dimensions of it by stretching the fingers; but no matter how big we make our hand, it does not hold much. If any one should ask you to thrust your hand down into a bag of twenty-dollar gold pieces, telling you that you could keep as many of the gold pieces for yourself as you could pull out with one hand, you would be quite doleful to discover how few of them you could hold. A handful is only a small bit, and so also is a mouthful. Every boy has often been rueful because his mouth would hold so little.

But when we come to an eyeful, we pass into a different realm. There is no comparison between it and a handful or an eyeful and a mouthful. Your eye cavity is very shallow, not nearly so deep as the mouth, and the retina is hardly larger than the nail of one's thumb, and yet see how much the eye can contain. It can

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take in all these fields, that yonder range of hills and the mountain that towers beyond them. Fields, hills and mountain—all can be packed in the eye, and still there is room! Here on the right is a river, and over on the left is a lake, and there is a waterfall on the side of the hill flashing amidst the green. And all these forms of water can be packed in the eye, and still there is room! Here is an orchard, and yonder is an oak-grove, and yonder on the side of the mountain is a forest of spruce. All of these trees can be packed in the eye. Here in one field there are probably twenty cows, and yonder on the hill is a flock of sheep, and over the grove a flock of crows is flying 'round and 'round. These can be driven into the eye, for the eye is a sort of Noah's ark, and can hold all sorts of birds and beasts and creeping things. There is a farmhouse, and there is a barn, and over yonder on the bank of the river is a sawmill. The landscape is not only the land but everything that man has put on the land. Here in the field are a number of men working. One of them is swinging a scythe. Over here I see a man jogging along in a cart, and over in yonder meadow I see a little girl, with a red hat, playing with her dog. All these are held in the eye, and still there is room! Yonder in the distance, I see the gleam of the ocean. The ocean is immense, but even it can go into the eye. And over all is the sky. The sky is also a part of the landscape. Every landscape painter knows that. You cannot have a landscape without the sky. The sky is the element which envelops all. Here, then, is what we mean by a landscape. It is as much of the earth's surface, and the sky over it, as you can gather up at one time in your eye.

Now, the first proposition I wish to lay down is this—that all landscapes are beautiful. Some of you may be inclined to deny that. You think at once of landscapes which are far from beautiful. You probably can think of landscapes that are positively ugly—bare and monotonous landscapes, from which all loveliness has been banished, landscapes that depress you, and from which you wish to make an escape. But in spite of your protest, I must insist upon my proposition, that all landscapes are beautiful. They may not all be beautiful to you, but they are beautiful to someone. Every landscape is beautiful to one who has eyes to discern its beauty. We are men of different tastes. We like different kinds of music and different kinds of poetry and different kinds of paintings. It is not surprising that we should like different kinds of landscapes. Some of us care nothing for a landscape unless it is rugged and wild. We want jagged rocks and mountain-peaks and deep, purple valleys and primeval forests. But others do not like that kind of landscape at all. They want a domesticated landscape, a humanized landscape, a landscape in which the hand of man is evident. They want beautiful lawns and flower-gardens and trees that are set in rows and carefully trimmed. They want the porch and the summer pavilion. No landscape can satisfy their heart which does not bear upon its face the stamp of the hand of man.

Some of us count no landscape beautiful that does not contain some form of water. There must be a river or a lake or a waterfall, or, at least, a little pond. The heart remains unsatisfied unless the eyes fall on water. Some of us are never awake to scenery until we reach the seacoast. The inland water does

not satisfy us. Show us the seacoast with its rocks and its sand and the surf of the incoming tide, and then the heart sings. Some of us see no beauty at all in old salt-marshes near the sea, or in stretches of country that are desert and flat, but that is because we are blind. If we have turned our back upon a landscape as containing in it nothing worth seeing, an artist comes along and exclaims: "Ah! this is what I have been looking for!" He promptly sets up his easel and goes to work. When you pass through an art gallery, you turn your back on this painting and that and the other, saying: "I do not care for that. I see nothing in that." But the artist sees something in it. There is a beauty there which causes his soul to glow! He that hath eyes to see—sees!

The landscape is continually changing. God is a great artist, and He is always showing His work under different lights. He throws a thin cloud over the face of the sun, and then says: "Now look at the landscape and tell Me how you like it." A little later He throws over the face of the sun a thick cloud and asks: "How do you like that?" The landscape never remains the same, two consecutive hours. It is a vast colour scheme, and the colours are constantly changing.

Here, in the city, our journalists get out afternoon editions. There is a three o'clock edition, a four o'clock, a five o'clock and a six o'clock edition. Every edition tells us of some new robbery, some new murder, some new accident. What a pleasure to read the afternoon editions of God! He gets out a new edition of the landscape every hour, and He prints them on the clouds. He loves to print hills and distant trees upon the clouds. The three o'clock edition, it may be, He prints on silver, and the four o'clock

edition, He prints on lavender, the five o'clock edition He prints on vermilion, the six o'clock edition He prints on violet or on gold. Not only does He give us those daily editions of the landscape, but He gives us a new sort of landscape in each of the four seasons. The Spring landscape is not at all the landscape of the Summer, and in the Autumn you have a different landscape still, and the Winter landscape is different far from all the others.

To each country God gives its own particular landscape. Great Britain is a little country, but how varied are its landscapes! The landscape of England is one thing, the landscape of Wales is another thing, the landscape of Scotland is different still, while the landscape of Ireland differs from all the others. This does not mean that you have only one kind of landscape in each of these four little countries, for you have a hundred kinds in each country. The landscape of the south of England is not like the landscape of the north, and the landscape of Essex is far different from the landscape of Devonshire. What a contrast between the landscape of Lincolnshire and the landscape of the Lake country! All the landscapes of all countries are beautiful. When you pass to the Continent, you have a series of contrasts. The landscape of Holland and the landscape of Switzerland, how far the two are apart! Some people say there is no scenery in Holland, but they do not know what they say. There is as much scenery in Holland as there is in Switzerland, but it is of a different kind. Who that has ever looked out upon those far-extended fields, with their cattle and their canals, could ever forget Holland? No wonder the artists all love to paint her. But when you pass into Switzerland, there

is beauty of another type. The scenery of Norway is far different from the scenery of Belgium, and the scenery of Spain is not at all like the scenery of Italy. The scenery of Russia is different from the scenery of Turkey, and the landscape of Palestine is far removed from the landscape of Egypt. To every country God gives landscapes in abundance, and all His landscapes are beautiful.

This has been a great comfort to me as I have travelled from country to country. It has brought me relief of heart in Mohammedan countries, where everything human is more or less depressing. Mohammedan government is nearly always a blunder and a farce, but in all Mohammedan countries, God has spread out exquisite landscapes, and it has solaced me to know that Mohammedans, if they are deprived of the blessings of good government, are still permitted to feed their souls on the beauty of the masterpieces of God.

But one need not travel in Europe to see landscapes. We have an abundance of them here at home. No country is richer in scenery than our own. It is worth while for an American to travel from New York City to San Francisco simply to gaze on the landscape. There is a film created by the Almighty three thousand miles long. No more wonderful film has even the Infinite ever created. It is not a landscape, but a series of landscapes, one landscape following another in swift succession. Now you are on the plain. Now you are in the mountains. Now you are in a valley. Now you are on the prairie. Now you are in the desert. Now you are in great forests. But wherever you are, you are in the midst of beauty. The only blot on the landscape is the city and town.

Our locomotives have a fashion of running into the backyards of towns, where the traveller sees piles of tin cans and rubbish-heaps and discarded kettles and pots—where he sees multitudinous clothes-lines, from which underclothes of all shapes and sizes are fluttering in the wind. Here indeed is ugliness, but it is the ugliness created by man. After you have spent hours with the landscapes, and come to a stop in the city, there blows in upon you a soot-storm—every flake of soot in the shape of a newspaper containing the story of some new divorce suit or some recent defalcation. But no matter what we think or see of the cities, there is only one fair judgment of the country—the landscape is beautiful. And the American who travels from New York Harbour to the Golden Gate is in a good mood at the end of his journey to sing:

"My country! 'tis of thee,
Sweet land of liberty,
Of thee I sing."

If he has never been able to sing it before, he will sing it now, with a glow of the heart:

"I love thy rocks and rills,
Thy woods and templed hills,
My heart with rapture thrills
Like that above."

It is a consolation to know that the landscape belongs to us all. The Declaration of Independence says that "All men are created equal." There are many times when this does not seem to be true. But when it comes to the landscape, we feel that all men are indeed equal. One of the brightest things Ralph

Waldo Emerson ever said is the remark he made in his essay *Nature* published nearly ninety years ago. He is speaking of the landscape and says: "It is made up of twenty or thirty farms. Mr. 'A' owns this one, Mr. 'B' that one, Mr. 'C' the other one; but no one of them owns the landscape." The landscape belongs to every one who can enjoy it, and the men who own the land have to pay taxes on it. Everything now is taxed but the landscape. That is yours, and you pay no tax on it. All sorts of property have to be kept up, but no one has to worry about keeping up the landscape. If you own land, you may have a lawsuit, because some other man may push his boundary line over on yours, but there are no lawsuits over the landscape. The landscape is a free gift of God, which He offers to us all.

It is an interesting fact that each one of us has a landscape of his own. The landscape of each one of us differs from the landscape of everybody else. I do not know what your landscape is like. Nor do you know what mine is like. I do not know how many colours you see, nor do you know how many I see. I do not know how piercing your eyesight is. It may be you see more tints than I do—more shades and grades of colour. It may be I see more than you. How many of the details of the landscape make an impression on you, I do not know. Some men see only masses. They have not an eye for detail. Whether I see more detail than you, we shall never know. To each one of us is a landscape given, particularly our own. I love to wonder what the landscape must have been to men who have had keener eyes than mine. I wish I could have seen the landscape that Ruskin saw. The Alps swept

Ruskin off his feet. He fell on his knees and prayed. I am mightily impressed by the Alps, but they have never swept me off my feet. I wish I could have seen the landscape that Wordsworth saw. It is impossible, for I do not have Wordsworth's eyes. Sir Walter Scott saw much in Nature, but he did not see the colour that was seen by William Black. William Cowper saw many beauties in the landscape, but he had no such eyes as Alexander Humboldt. There are some men so sensitive and impressionable that they have feared to give themselves up to Nature, feeling that they would be swept completely away. Lacordaire, the great preacher of Notre Dame in the early part of the nineteenth century, wrote one day: "I have said 'good-bye' to the oceans and the rivers and the mountains." He said it in a tone of exultation. He had found himself, I presume, more and more under the control of natural beauty, and he wanted to keep his soul free for the enjoyment of spiritual loveliness. He deliberately turned his back on Nature, in order to stand face to face with his moral ideal. William Blake, the English artist and poet, always denounced Wordsworth as an idolater. He accused him of worshipping Nature. Blake looked upon Nature as "an illusion of Satan." He determined to keep himself free from the fascination of natural beauty, in order that he might give himself unreservedly to the adoration of the beautiful in the spirit world.

One always sees the landscape through himself. There is no other way to see it. That is the reason the landscape sometimes seems to be sad, and at other times it seems to be glad. It depends upon the mood of the soul. There are times when the landscape

laughs, and there are times when it cries, and whether it laughs or cries depends upon our own heart. There are landscapes inexpressibly dear to us, because we see them through the memories of childhood. Who could ever forget the landscape upon which his boyish eyes feasted. When he goes back, no matter how many years have elapsed, he finds in the old landscape a beauty which he can find nowhere else in all the world. He finds himself walking in music, and the music is caused by the vibration of memories' chords. They are being played upon by the beauties of the earth and sky. There are spots on the earth's surface for ever sacred, and their loveliness has in it something supernatural, because of the mighty events which took place there.

I think, just now, of three great battlefields. The battlefield of Waterloo is beautiful beyond description; and who can look at it without thinking of the men who fought and died there? The battlefield of Gettysburg, how it smiles! But I never see it smile that I do not see women weeping because their sons are dead. Last summer I stood upon the battlefield of Verdun. Beauty stretches out in all directions. Over all sweeps the eternal sky, full of light and of Deity. At my feet the poppies blossomed. But as I looked, I thought of the 400,000 French boys who gave up their life upon that field, and the whole landscape became dabbled in blood. We must always look upon the landscape through ourself—through what we know, through what we have suffered, through what we are.

We have artists known as sculptors. They chisel marble into forms of beauty. God Himself is the Great Sculptor. He fashions the landscape by means

of thousands of workmen of His own selection. He has chiselled the mountains and the hills, the ridges and the valleys, after a plan of His own. What is the landscape but a piece of sculpture—the handiwork of the Eternal Artist? We have landscape gardeners. The only reason that we have them is because God Himself is the Great Landscape Gardener.

The world, if rightly seen, is still the Garden of Eden, and in the cool of the day, you can still walk with God. We have landscape painters, but we would not have them if God Himself were not a landscape painter. He painted the picture first, and all our landscape painters are only interpreters and copyists. Herbert Spencer used to say: "No matter where we are, we are in the presence of the Infinite and Eternal Energy, from which all things proceed." Certainly all must feel, in the midst of the landscape, that "all of this beauty has come from the Infinite Mind and Heart." A man who has spent a day in feasting his soul upon its loveliness is ready to say with new confidence and gladness, "I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth."

XIII

LAKES

WHAT is a lake? It is not easy to say just what it is. We all know what it is, and yet we cannot readily define it. That is a singular thing—that we can know a thing and yet not tell it. We cannot say that a lake is a large body of water, because an ocean is that, and a lake is not an ocean, nor is an ocean a lake. We cannot say that a lake is a small body of water, because a puddle is a small body of water, and a puddle is not a lake, nor is a lake a puddle. Somebody has said that "it is a considerable sized body of water," but that will not do. Lake Erie is a considerable sized body of water, but Lake Mohonk is small, and yet both Erie and Mohonk are lakes. Lakes are of all sizes, some are big, some are so very big that we refuse to call them lakes at all. The Caspian Lake, for instance, is so immense that we call it a "sea." The Mediterranean Lake is so enormous that no one is willing to call it a lake. For centuries it has been known as a "sea." And yet a lake can be very large and still be called a "lake." Lake Superior is as large as all New England, with the exception of Maine, but we never call it a "sea," we call it a "lake." Lakes, then, can be very large, and they also can be small. When they reach a certain degree of smallness we call them ponds or pools. But how small must a lake be to be called a "pool"? There is a pool in Africa known as "Stanley's Pool," which is twenty-five miles

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long and sixteen miles wide. How proud it must be to be the biggest pool in the world! A little lake is called a pond. The most famous lake in Massachusetts is called a "pond"—"Walden Pond." Henry Thoreau lifted that pond to immortality by loving it. And, therefore, if you want to define a lake at all, you might say "it is a body of water somewhere between a puddle and a sea."

There are two traits, however, which enable us to tell a lake from any other body of water: A lake is standing water. A lake does not flow. In this respect it differs from a river—a river is always going somewhere. It has an engagement to keep with some other river further down, or possibly with the ocean. The Hudson is never willing to stand still. If you compel a river to stop, it ceases to be a river. Say "halt!" and it lies down and dies, and is transmuted into something else. A river cannot stop and remain itself. The Hudson is a river, and therefore it is always going on. If you could hear it talking, you would hear it saying: "I have an engagement with the Atlantic off Sandy Hook, and so I cannot tarry." That is quite different from a lake. Lake Placid never goes anywhere—always stays where it is. Lake Placid is content. It has no engagement with any river or with any ocean. A brook also is never still—it hastens on "to join the brimming river," but a lake has no such disposition. Lake Saranac is not dreaming of joining any river. Lake Saranac wants to be where it is. It says: "I cannot leave my little sister to marry any river. I am going to stay just where I am always." That, then, is one mark of a lake—it is standing water.

You always know where to find it. Another mark

of a lake is that it is silent. Water is always vocal when it has a chance, except in lakes. The ocean is noisy. When a storm slaps it in the face it roars like a lion that is angry, but even when the ocean is in a gentle mood, it is everlastingly talkative. When you leave the city and go down to spend a night on the coast you go to bed in your cottage or your hotel, and hear the ocean talking. It will talk to you all night long. It is worse than an elevated train. The train comes and goes, but the ocean is with you every minute. Waterfalls thunder. The greatest of them thunder so loud you can hear them several miles. Even brooks are noisy. The poets say that the brooks "babble." An English poet, who was very fond of brooks, did not hesitate to say that they "chatter." All the poets have been glad to say that brooks "sing." But a lake never sings, never chatters, never babbles, never thunders, never roars. A lake is always silent. It believes with Carlyle, that silence is golden. To be sure, a lake can be made to say something. If a storm strikes it hard, and strikes it repeatedly, it can compel a lake to speak, but that is not its nature. It will speak for only a little while, and then sink down into silence again. And so, if you want to converse with a lake, you must carry on conversation without words. Here, then, we arrive within sight of a definition: "A lake is a standing, silent body of water, somewhere between a puddle and a sea."

But why bother about a definition at all? Definitions are man-made institutions. They have their uses, but they are a great nuisance. Nature does not believe in them—she has no definitions. What difference does it make what a lake is, provided you know what it is? Nature cares nothing for names. Names

are all man-made. There are no names in the great book of Nature. You remember it is said in *Genesis*, that after God had created all living things, He turned them over to man, saying: "You may name them." One might infer that He meant to say: "I have no time for such an occupation as that. I do not care to name things. You may coin what names you please." And therefore a man can enjoy Nature without knowing any names at all. I am so glad I do not have to know the names of the stars, or the names of the trees, or the names of the flowers. They are all what they are, and I want nothing to do with mere names. Names are a great network of impertinences and nuisances which man has spread over the form of Nature. I advise you to tear the whole network away, and deal with Nature without names. A rose is sweet no matter what you call it, and a lake is beautiful no matter what its name. You may call it "pond" or "pool," "mere" or "tarn," "loch" or "lake," it makes no difference. A lake is what it is, and that is what we are thinking of in this sermon.

It is a strange fact that the larger the lake, the less impressive it is. A lake to be impressive must be small. That is not true of anything else. It is certainly not true of buildings—the larger the building the more we are impressed by it. A cathedral impresses us largely in proportion to its magnitude. St. Patrick's Cathedral is the most impressive church in New York, because it is the largest. Everybody, on visiting New York, wants to see St. Patrick's. When the Cathedral of St. John The Divine is completed, every one will want to see that. It will be the third largest cathedral in the world, and as soon as visitors arrive we shall want to take them to see it. St.

Peter's, in Rome, has for centuries held the eyes of the world, not because of the material of which it is built, but because of its vastness. It is the largest temple ever erected by man to the glory of the Son of God.

Even skyscrapers are impressive according to their height. We have little skyscrapers, but they make no impression. Everybody wants to see the Woolworth Building, because that is the highest of all. And if we ever get another skyscraper still higher, then everybody will want to see that! As with buildings so with mountains. We are impressed by Mount Washington, because it is the highest of the White Mountains, and we are impressed by Mounts Whitney and Shasta, because they are the greatest masses of granite on the Pacific Coast. "Mont Blanc is the monarch of mountains. They crowned him long ago." Why did they crown him? Because he is so big. Men are willing to travel thousands of miles to see Monte Rosa and the Matterhorn, because they press their icy heads against the blue. The greater the mountain the more impressive it is, but not so with a lake. We are not fond of large lakes.

When I announced to you that I was going to talk about lakes, you did not think of the Great Lakes. You did not expect me to talk about those. They hardly seem lakes at all. They are vast bodies of water that have been commercialized, they are engaged in trade, they are carriers—beasts of burden. They carry potatoes and pig-iron, copper-ore and wheat. They are associated in our minds with corporations and factories and shipping. Men write big books on the commerce of the Great Lakes. We are not interested in great lakes; only small lakes cuddle close

to the heart. When I said I was going to talk about lakes, you thought at once of some little body of water that is dear to you. A lake to be really enjoyable must be so narrow that you can see across it. Unless you can see across it, it is not an ideal lake. You must be able to see the trees and the farms and the cliffs, and the hills on the other side. And you must also be able to see from one end of it to the other, or what seems to you to be the other end. For it is an interesting fact that a lake seems to know that it must look small, and therefore when it is long, it hides its length by one of two tricks. It either winds or it develops islands. Nature covers up the length of a lake in those two ways, by islands and windings. For instance, Lake Como is thirty miles long, which is altogether too long for an ideal lake, and so Nature has cut Como into three sections, and when you come to what looks like the end of the lake, it suddenly opens out into another lake, and when you come to the end of that, it opens out again, giving you a delightful surprise.

Lugano is only twenty miles long, but that is too long for an ideal lake, and so Nature employs the same trick, converting Lugano into several lakes, making each one look short. Maggiore is still longer, but in this case Nature scatters the surface of the lake with islands, so that no matter where you go, a shore lies in your eye. Our own Lake George is too long to be beautiful. Thirty-six miles are too many, and therefore Nature at one point draws in the shores, making it seem that the lake there ends. Moreover, Nature has scattered two hundred islands over the surface of Lake George, so that no one can see just how long the lake is. Take away its islands, and Lake

George would lose much of its beauty. That is one thing which the heart insists on—a lake must be small. If a lake persists in being big, then the heart feels it has been wronged. Sometimes Nature becomes desperate in its efforts to make a lake of the proper length. A long while ago there was a lake in Switzerland which the Divine Artist thought too long to fit the scenery, and so He cut the lake in two. On one side of Interlaken you have the Lake of Brienz. On the other side you have the Lake of Thun. They are now two lakes, but there was a time when these two were one.

If you ask for an explanation of this, I presume the only explanation is that when we look upon a lake, we demand beauty. A lake must be beautiful or we are not satisfied. And there are times when we want grandeur and sublimity, but we do not want these all the time. There are moods in which we hunger for the illimitable—the unbounded—the infinite. We find this in the ice fields of the North, in the prairies of the West, in the deserts of Africa, and best of all in the great sky overhead. But it is an astonishing fact, that the immeasurable does not satisfy us. We want something else. Grandeur is too exciting. Sublimity leaves us still hungry. We want the beautiful. The sky sometimes oppresses. The sky full of stars sometimes well-nigh crushes us. We want the limited and the bounded, the confined, the snug, something that will come close to the heart. We find this in a lake. And so when people talk about lakes, you will find them often using the word "lovely," or "pretty," or "beautiful." We grade lakes by their beauty, as some men grade women. It is impossible to get people to agree on what are the

most beautiful lakes. That is a subject often discussed by tourists. The question is: Which are the most beautiful, the Irish lakes or the Scottish, the Scottish lakes or the English, the English lakes or the Norwegian, the Norwegian lakes or the Swedish, the Swedish lakes or the Swiss, the Swiss lakes or the Italian, the Italian lakes or the Canadian?

There are many modest Americans who claim that our own lakes are the most beautiful of all. It is a question which can never be settled. In the realm of æsthetic judgment men must forever differ. Everything depends upon the eye and the mind which lies behind the eye.

What is the most beautiful lake in the world? That is as futile a question as the question—who is the most beautiful woman in the world? It is impossible to give an answer. To some people, Lake Lucerne is the most perfect of all lakes, but to others it is Lake Taho in California. To others, it is Lake Chelan in Washington. To others, it is Lake Louise in the Canadian Rockies. To others, it is Lake St. Mary in Glacier Park in Montana. To others, it is Lake George. There are multitudes who believe that God has never made a lovelier lake than our own Lake George. It is an interesting fact that when Sir Walter Scott wanted to charm the soul with a scene of ideal loveliness, he pictured a beautiful woman on a beautiful island, in a beautiful lake. The Lady of the Lake is one of the deathless heroines of mankind.

Perhaps it is because God loves the beautiful that He makes so many lakes. Lincoln used to say that God must love common people because He makes so many of them. And if that is a fair line of argument, there is no doubt that God loves lakes. There

are so many that no one can count them. In the single State of Minnesota there are at least ten thousand lakes, and in all America they are numbered by hundreds of thousands. There are other hundreds of thousands in Europe, and other thousands in Asia. They are found everywhere. They are on all the continents and on nearly all the islands. God tucks them in wherever He has a chance. Sometimes He puts a lake below the level of the sea; sometimes He puts one on a mountain side; sometimes high up on a mountain side; sometimes on a mountain top, above the clouds. There are many men who can never see the sea, and so God compensates them for their loss by giving them a lake to look at. God is the Great Artist, and He shows His talent by His method of making lakes. He cannot make many oceans. This is only a hall bedroom of a planet. You cannot get many large pieces of furniture in, but there is room for many lakes, and so God makes them in great variety. He makes them of all shapes and sizes, and in each one He brings together all the possible forms of beauty. The shores of a lake, how endlessly various they are! Not content with these, God is always laying islands on the surface of a lake, and He makes them with all the care with which He makes a continent. Have you ever studied the shore line of an island in a lake, and noted the little capes and promontories, the miniature creeks, and bays, and inlets with here and there an isthmus, as though God took delight in making a replica of a continent—a reduced model of the world? Because God likes them we like them too. Our love for them came from Him.

The world is usually lovely around a lake, and seems to take delight in showing forth new varieties

of loveliness. Grass, for instance, is not afraid of a lake. It is afraid of the ocean. It will not go near the ocean. Grass blades are frightened by the ocean, and will lie down and die when they come within sight of it. But grass is not afraid of a lake. It will grow right up to the water's edge. The grass blades will even play with the ripples. They will play with them all day, and keep on playing through the night, and never grow weary. Flowers are not afraid of a lake. They will grow up to the edge of it, and some kinds of flowers will even wade out into the water, and when they get there, they are so happy that they are never willing to come back. They live and bloom there in the water. Even the soil at the bottom of a lake seems to be instinct with beauty, for when the mud of the lake comes to the surface, it blossoms!

Trees are all fond of a lake. They will come down to the shore and grow there, and sometimes they will lean out over the water. It was in that way that I first discovered that trees are vain. I saw them standing by the hour looking at themselves! A lake is the vanity-case of a tree. But one can see in a lake more than trees. One can see the clouds. All of the clouds are reproduced in the lake. The loveliness of heaven is brought to the earth by the magical power of a lake. What is more soothing than to look at a lake—to gaze on its surface so full of iridescent reflections! How interesting to note the playing of the breezes and the zephyrs, scampering hither and thither playing tag, perhaps, leaping into the air, and then falling back upon the lake again, disturbing it just a little, mixing up the reflections. Now and then a gust comes along—a sort of ruffian of a zephyr—a boorish and ill-mannered breeze, who is so rough

that it smashes the reflections. But the lake does not mind it much. The gust speedily disappears, and the lake is its own tranquil self again.

From the earliest times men have been drawn to lakes, not at first by their beauty, but by their offer of protection. You will find in the libraries many books on Lake Dwellers—those strange people who lived ages ago, and who drove piles into lakes, upon which they built their houses. We have lake dwellers to-day, but of a different sort. They do not live upon the lakes, but around the lakes. Every lake in New England has a cluster of people around it. They have come from all sections of the country to build there their summer homes, and through the summer months they drink in the strength and refreshment which the lakes have to give. They are the lake dwellers of the twentieth century. Those little lakes have a genius for taking the fever out of the brow, and the fret out of the heart. If there is no lake in the landscape, we feel that we have been robbed. If a man is rich enough to own a thousand acres, and if on those thousand acres there is no lake, then the rich man is almost sure to make one. His estate is not complete without a lake. Nor is a park an ideal park without a lake. You cannot make a park out of trees and rocks and flowers alone, you must have a sheet of water. What would our Central Park be without its lakes?

Have you ever thought how much a lake is like a human being? You might think sometimes of a lake as a little baby in a cradle. God has put it in a cradle—a cradle made of granite. He chiselled it out of the solid rock by means of chisels made of ice. He has decorated the crib just as mothers decorate the

cribs of their children. Over the sides of the crib He has spread lichens and ferns and mosses. Unlike all other babies this baby does not cry, but like other babies it must be fed. God feeds it on brooks; just as He fed Elijah by means of the ravens, so He feeds a lake by means of brooks, and the brooks come down out of heaven. So that we might say God feeds a lake upon manna, a form of food that comes out of the skies. And sometimes He feeds lakes in other ways—by springs at the bottom, as it were upon hidden manna. He feeds us in ways which the world knows not of, and so He often feeds lakes from sources which the world does not see.

A lake breathes. There are learned books written on the respiration of lakes. A lake takes a long breath in the Spring, and another deep breath in the Autumn; but we must not go into that, for that would make my sermon technically scientific. A lake, like a human being, decays. All the lakes now upon the earth are dying. Many lakes are already dead. The geologists take delight in studying their remains. A lake like a human being can write. Every lake writes its biography. It writes it in the rocks. Our Great Lakes have written a series of wonderful biographies, and the geologists are now translating them. When the translation is completed, they will make the most fascinating books ever published. But the Great Lakes are dying. So are all the lakes in New England. Lake Moosehead is decaying. Lake Winnepesaukee will some day vanish. Lake Sunapee is only for a little time. Lake George is doomed. All the lakes are on their death-bed, and therefore I urge you to enjoy them while you can!

I do not mean to intimate that they will die before

you do. It is with a lake as it is with God. A thousand years are as one day, and a day as a thousand years. But although a lake may live for a long time, it is mortal, and its goal is the tomb. It is possible to kill lakes. They are killing them at present in Wisconsin. They kill them there as they used to kill snakes. They want the land for corn and potatoes, and therefore they are putting some of their lakes out of the way. It is possible to murder a lake. There is only one river on the earth which I hate, and that is the River Rhone. I hate it because it is murdering the Lake of Geneva. It is slowly taking the life out of that beautiful lake. I have often wished that somebody would catch that river and chain it in a dungeon in the Castle of Chillon!

Because lakes are so beautiful, they make a profound impression upon the human spirit. If a man cannot be impressed by any other form of Nature, he is hard hearted indeed if he does not respond to the beauty of a lake. It is an interesting fact that the man who, more than any other man who has lived within the last hundred years, taught humanity to love Nature, was a man who grew up among a few little lakes. William Wordsworth has rightfully been called "The High Priest of Nature." It was he who led mankind into a deeper appreciation of the bloom and wonder of the natural world. When a boy of eight, he was taken to live on the shore of a little sheet of water, known as "Esthwait." It is only two miles long and just a few hundred yards wide. Around that lake he played. In that lake, in summer time, he swam. Over that lake in winter time he skated. He loved it, and the lake passed into his soul. When he became a man he made his home near two

other lakes—Grasmere and Rydal. Grasmere is only a mile and a quarter long. Rydal is only half a mile long. They are so small that you and I would call them ponds. Around these two English ponds this poet sauntered for fifty years, and by his poetry, inspired by these lakes, he opened for millions of men a new fountain of enjoyment. He led mankind into a deeper appreciation of the beauties of the natural world by way of the lakes.

The world's greatest religious teacher, Jesus of Nazareth, lived by a lake. He was not born near a lake, nor did He spend His childhood near a lake, but as soon as He entered upon His public career, He changed His home and removed to the shore of a lake—the Lake of Galilee. The men whom He chose to be His intimate friends were, with the sole exception of Judas Iscariot, men who lived within sight of that lake. Most of His teaching was uttered near that lake. Sometimes He would sit on a hill and preach, looking now and then at the lake. At other times He would sit on the shore, with the lake rippling at His feet while He taught the people. At other times He would push out upon the surface of the lake and speak to the people from a boat. He loved the lake, and I wonder if something of the beauty of the Gospels is not due to the sparkle of that lake. The Gospels are amazingly refreshing, and possibly something of their power comes from the bewitching loveliness of the Lake of Galilee. John, the Disciple whom Jesus loved, grew up near this lake. He loved it, and when he was an old man and looked into heaven from the Isle of Patmos, he saw up close to the throne of God "a sea of glass mingled with fire." I wonder if that were not the Lake of Galilee, glorified!

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